

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

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The Miners Strike Belfast comes to Blidworth

The effectiveness of the miners strike and the determination of the miners and their communities to fight on has begun to create divisions among the ruling class. While Thatcher remains intransigent and eager to pursue the crusade against Scargill and the NUM, other sections of the ruling class are becoming increasingly aware of the dangers of the strike continuing. The British economy, already very vulnerable to any added international and domestic pressures, has now suffered the double blow of rapidly rising international interest rates and the sudden outbreak of a national dock strike. Little wonder that Thatcher's leadership is being called into question by her previous allies. Not only does the miners' strike threaten further economic damage but, more significantly, it poses a serious challenge to the political legitimacy of the British state, its police, courts and other institutions. And in doing this it inevitably represents a threat to the traditional leadership of the Labour and trade union movement, the vast majority of whom have scabbed on the miners' strike.

Under these growing pressures arising from the determined fight of the miners the National Coal Board (NCB) has been forced to engage in serious talks. The NCB has, after eighteen weeks, apparently begun to backtrack on its pit closure programme. As we go to press the talks are continuing. It is clear that Thatcher's and MacGregor's intention to smash the miners and decimate their communities is foundering on the rock of the miners' resistance.

The outcome of the strike rests on the continuing determination and sacrifice of the miners and their communities. On the one side, the ruling class has ranged its whole apparatus of police and courts against the miners; with whole sections of the trade union movement, as in the case of the steel workers, giving their support to Thatcher and MacGregor by continuing to work; the Labour Party has offered only token opposition to Thatcher. On the other side, the ruling class is up against not only the

determination and militancy of the miners, but of the women, whose self-organisation of their communities, aided by countrywide support in terms of food and money, has enabled the strike to hold out.

State repression

Arrests are now approaching 4,000, with an increasing number of miners facing charges such as 'illegal assembly' and 'riotous assembly'—all of which carry the threat of prison sentences. Another miner—Joe Green—has been killed on picket duty. Massive road block operations continue to seal off Nottinghamshire from pickets: on 28 June 1,900 miners in 475 cars were turned back while on 5 July 3,500 miners were turned back—2,000 got through. On the same day police turned back 1,200 pickets from the Scunthorpe area. Whole towns are sealed off at a moment's notice.



JOHN STURROCK NETWORK

Such is the determination of the government to keep Notts and other working mines open that each such mine has a permanently allocated police support unit (PSU). Each PSU consists of 3 sections of 10 officers, sergeants and an inspector. They are all specially trained riot police with equipment standardised on a countrywide basis. The use of well practised manoeuvres such as snatch squads operating in V-formation have become commonplace, as is the sight of police doing military style drill in pits yards.

As pressure has increased on the ruling class to keep up supplies to steelworks, the police have launched brutal attacks against pickets. On 18 June at Orgreave coke depot in South Yorkshire, scene of previous battles, riot continued on page 2

TEN YEARS IN ENGLISH GAOLS
Centre pages
An interview with Reamonn Mac Lochlainn

FIVE PEOPLE GO TO GAOL Police defend terrorist embassy

Since apartheid Prime Minister PW Botha's visit to Britain on 2 June, the police have banned all pickets from the pavement outside the South African embassy. Five people, including an RCG member, have gone to gaol and 137 people have been arrested as a result of the police efforts to enforce the ban. Those arrested have been charged with 'wilful obstruction of the police in the course of their duty'. Their duty, under the now notorious Vienna Convention, consists of protecting the 'peace and dignity' of the embassy. Protesting against apartheid has now been declared a crime. This is yet another of the concessions that all British governments, Labour and Tory, have made to protect their real interests, British profits from South Africa—Britain's biggest partner in racist crime.

As soon as the ban was imposed and the police refused to negotiate, City of London Anti-Apartheid Group decided to continue its normal Friday night pickets from 5.30-7.30pm outside the embassy. It soon became clear that in order to oppose British collaboration with apartheid it was necessary to fight to defend democratic rights in Britain. After the first arrests on 8 June the South African Embassy Picket Campaign 1984 was formed.

Right from the beginning it was supported by many organisations and individuals who believe that this police ban is yet another attempt to restrict the rights of British people to demonstrate, and yet another step in collaboration with the apartheid regime. Amongst those supporting the campaign are: Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!, Lab-

our MPs and councillors, Young Liberals, Kings Cross Women's Centre, Sri Asokamala Campaign, Irish Republican Prisoners Campaign, Greenham Women Peace Camp, ISM, IWSG, gay and lesbian groups, teachers, student unions and trade unionists.

Every Friday more than 200 people join the picket in Duncannon Street, at the side of the embassy, and the numbers are growing week by week. Every Friday more demonstrators cross the road to the pavement outside the embassy. As well as the 137 arrests, 111 charges have been made under the Vienna Convention. 15 people, including 3 RCG members, have now had bail conditions imposed which ban them from the pavement. Five people have been sent to gaol for breaking bail conditions: continued on page 4

Nest egg for rich

In just one week in July the futile hopes of economic recovery in crisis-ridden Britain received a series of devastating blows. Rising international interest rates and the run on the pound have led to a sharp 2 per cent rise in interest rates. At 12 per cent, the rates are at the highest level for two years. In just one day some £540m is wiped off company profits threatening investment and undermining any economic recovery. Mortgage rates have shot up by 2¼ per cent, the biggest increase for nearly five years and the second largest ever. These rates, in real terms, are at a record level and have knocked the government's optimistic inflation forecasts right off course.

The miners' strike, now entering its nineteenth week, has severely shaken the confidence that the capitalists—both here and overseas—had in the strike-breaking Thatcher government. The national dock strike has only added salt to the wound. Panic selling hit the stock market. A wave of selling shares at lunchtime on Thursday (12 July) sent the FT index down by 23 points—near the record fall for one day when the miners brought the Heath government down in 1974. This week alone the index

has fallen by over 48 points.

But every cloud has a silver lining. The fact that the capitalists have no confidence in Britain's economic recovery—profits are not high enough—means they send their money overseas. And as Thatcher said in April this year, 'investment overseas is a good thing...' this 'investment and the income from it would provide a nest egg when revenue from the North Sea declined'. So there you have it. British capitalists can survive—they simply must live off the backs

of the rest of the world. And needless to say the section of the capitalist class that the Thatcher government speaks for—the financiers and the bankers—have been building up that 'nest egg' year by year.

Britain's private sector assets abroad have reached a staggering £461,733m—an increase of 19 per cent on the previous year. The vast proportion of this, £341,123m (74%), consists of assets of the imperialist banks. Not a bad 'nest egg' for a bankrupt government.

Britain is a growing creditor nation. Its net assets abroad last year climbed another 15 per cent to reach a record £55.6bn. This is equivalent to about £2,600 for every working person—although if you happen to have a job you won't get much benefit from it. Since the Thatcher government came into power in 1979, Britain's net assets have risen fourfold from £13bn to £55.6bn. So while unemployment in Britain grew to 4 million, while investment in manufacturing industry fell by some 40 per cent, the financiers and bankers have been raking it in—building their 'nest egg' for the future.

David Read

BELFAST COMES TO BLIDWORTH

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police and cavalry charges were launched against miners with unprecedented ferocity. Scores of miners were attacked including Arthur Scargill. Miners had to meet force with force: barricades were built and cars were commandeered and burnt. Stakes were driven into the road to stop police horse charges. Police snatch squads were ordered to 'take prisoners', attacking in V-formations, and were heard cheering and clapping as wounded pickets were dragged off to police vans.

A lesson learned by the oppressed in the Six Counties of Ireland is that beneath the mask of 'democracy' the British state consists of a relentless machinery of police, courts and prisons which it sets into motion against those who try to fight it. Blanket bail conditions - imposed in 3,000 cases by the end of June, forcible photographing, fingerprinting, the use of curfews, and the corrupt alliance of police, magistrates and solicitors, are the means being used to criminalise the most militant miners. By these means, police are also massing intelligence while physically reducing the number of miners available for picketing. Breaking of bail conditions means prison - several miners and NUM officials have spent time in prison for this reason. Mansfield in Nottingham has become a centre for mass trials and detentions.

Curfews on striking Nottingham miners from 9pm to 7am are widespread. With renewed NCB attempts to get North Derbyshire men back to work. Four Derbyshire strikers have been issued with curfews of 1pm to 9am - 20 hours! This amounts to virtual house arrest.

POLICE RIOT AT FITZWILLIAM

FRFI supporters visited Fitzwilliam, Yorkshire. Below are extracts from their account.

On 9 July, after the continuing police harassment of Brendan Conway, a young miner, the police suddenly attacked people outside the local pub. Marching in a 70 strong formation, clad in helmets and with truncheons at the ready. They blocked off the road either side of the pub and then launched an attack on the people in the car park. One bystander, Peter Hurst, was grabbed by 5 police, handcuffed to a post outside the pub and was beaten with truncheons until he was unconscious. His head needed 17 stitches because of his wounds and his blood stains round the car park remained until the next day. Horrified protests from the people to the police were met with 'You can't do anything about it because you have got no witnesses - it's your word against ours!' Peter was then dragged unconscious to the waiting police van. At the same time the police made a bee line for Brendan Conway who was in the pub. He too was handcuffed to a lamp-post, and beaten mercilessly with boots and truncheons. He was then thrown into a police van. He needed 5 stitches in his head wounds. Joanne Worth, for her protests, was assaulted by the police, had her clothes ripped, smashed in the face with a truncheon and then arrested.

The people stoned the police station and later barricaded off the City estate area. The police refused to enter the area as they were outnumbered and every time they drove near they were stoned by the people. An NCB van and an 'A'-registration car were burned and alarms at the pithead were set off but still the police did not come. Slogans calling for Victory to the Miners were daubed on the walls. Just as in Derry and other nationalist areas of Ireland a no-go area was created. The police eventually re-entered the City estate at 2.30am after people had dispersed. They smashed down Kathleen Doody's door to arrest her son Dennis.

Running battles with the police continued until the early hours of the morning. At one stage the police, and not the miners as has been claimed in the press, closed the main London to Leeds railway to allow 50 riot clad police to march from Hemsworth to Fitzwilliam. At the end of the night 8 people had been arrested, six men and two women. The next day at a special hearing at Pontefract Magistrates Court they were bailed on condition that they accepted a curfew from 7.00pm to 7.00am until 21 August. All 8 have been charged under the Public Order Act with 'breach of the peace'...

BLIDWORTH

As told to FRFI by Doreen Humber - striker's wife

After the well known incidents at Blidworth in which police carried out beatings and searches at Doreen's and other strikers' homes where Yorkshire pickets were staying, the harassment has continued.

The very next day while two reporters were here in the Welfare centre a young lad was attacked by a scab just outside. The police grabbed the striker and then they grabbed my son David who's just 17. They said 'Doreen Humber's lad - we've got him'. They tried to get into the Welfare centre but we shut the door so they broke in and trapped a girl's arm in the door. They charged David with 'breach of the peace and obstruction'. In court they said he had been harbouring Yorkshire pickets in the garden!

The ruling class is tireless in its efforts to beat the strike. Their attempts to smash the strike have been coordinated at the highest government level. A leak to the *Daily Mirror* recently exposed the government's involvement in the deal that settled the railway workers' wage claim. While unable to find the money to keep open pits, or to fund the NHS, Thatcher has endless resources to devote to smashing the NUM. Scargill has stated that the dispute has now cost more than the Falklands War. A leading City firm of stockbrokers estimated the cost at over £1bn. BSC (on whose board MacGregor still sits) is funding convoys of lorries to carry iron ore at a cost of £50,000 per day, while the NCB pays £4m for a series of lying advertisements in the press.

Working class divided

The strike has continued to polarise the working class and to expose ever more clearly those who will not support the miners. At the forefront of those turning their backs on the miners are the steel workers. Faced with the threatened blockade of steel plants Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) officials stated at their union conference on 24 June 'we will carry coal in on our backs to save the plants'. The ISTC conference discussion of the miners' request for support was dominated by British Steel Corporation (BSC) Deputy Chairman Bob Scholey, who said BSC would not accept any 'managerially unacceptable' agreement between miners and steelworkers. Bill Sims, ISTC leader, said that the steel men would have to abide by this decision. Further, when Sims suggested a 50% production level and Scholey insisted on 70%, the latter was backed by the conference.

Railway workers have almost completely stopped coal and ore trains into Llanwern, Scunthorpe and Ravenscraig. This in turn has brought about the increase in scab lorry convoys - driven at murderous speed past picket lines. At Llanwern, where pickets battled with police, lorries in convoys of more than 100 in both directions, were drawn from firms as far apart as Notts and Exeter. The Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) has at last taken the decision to expel 14 of their members who are drivers from Hazell Transport, in Newport, one of the main firms organising the scab convoys.

National Union of Seamen members have continued to blockade the import of coal. On 9 July the TGWU called a national dockworkers strike after the unloading of iron ore by scab labour at Immingham near Scunthorpe for use by the British Steel Corporation. The length of this strike could have a critical impact on the miners strike.

At the same time the scab miners of Notts, three quarters of whom are working, are in the process of forming, with the NCB's blessing, a breakaway union called Notts 84 - whose leaders are reportedly rushing to join the SDP/Liberal Alliance. The Notts scabs have received the full backing of the courts, with the High Court even ruling that the NUM conference could not discuss the new disciplinary and expulsion rules which the scabs fear. Scargill and the NUM conference treated the court's reactionary judgement with the contempt it deserved.

NEWSTEAD

Two brothers arrested in Newstead were handcuffed so tightly that the police could not unlock the cuffs and had to call the pit blacksmith to cut the cuffs off. The brothers spent 12 days in Lincoln prison and local strikers mounted a 200 strong picket outside.

Labour Party

Whilst the striking miners have continued their bitter struggle for 4½ months, the Labour MPs have hardly disturbed the tranquility of the House of Commons. Thatcher has faced no serious threat from a Labour opposition which she knows has not, with a few honourable exceptions, supported the striking miners. Spineless windbag, Kinnock, has repeatedly called on Thatcher to intervene in the strike - precisely what she and her blue-uniformed thugs have been doing all along! After the battle against police at Orgreave on 18 June, Kinnock said that the scenes there were 'horrifying, untypical and un-British'. No doubt like similar scenes in the Six Counties of Ireland. Kinnock knows that the miners' struggle has gone beyond the realms of the traditional constitutional and useless methods so beloved by the leaders of the British labour movement. The left Labour MPs, whilst supporting the miners, will not push the Labour Party for open support as this would expose the vast numbers of scabs within its ranks. Thus Tony Benn withdrew a motion to the Labour Party NEC calling for national demonstrations in favour of the NUM with the view to organising a joint national campaign against pit closures.

Miners resistance - the lessons learned

'...acts of terrorism without the bullet and the bomb'. James Anderton, Chief Constable of Manchester, on mass pickets.

The scale of state repression has forced the striking miners to go beyond legal, constitutional and peaceful methods of struggle. The ruling class, which has denied the miners their basic democratic rights, has now begun accusing them of terrorism. The miners are learning the

lessons which the Irish people and oppressed people throughout the world have learned - that they have no choice but to fight and that they will be branded as criminals and terrorists when they do so. The anger of striking miners, after 18 weeks of police beatings, spying and harassment, has reached boiling point. Police stations in Maltby, Goldthorpe and Hemsworth have been stoned and besieged. At Rossington Colliery (near Doncaster) an NCB van was set on fire and used as a barricade in order to besiege managers carrying out work against the wishes of the NUM. Similar attacks on NCB property took place in Fitzwilliam on the night of 9 July and were the result of anger against police provocation. Barricades have also been used at Orgreave to defend pickets from rampaging mobs of police. Prevented by police from talking to drivers in the convoys of scab lorries speeding into steelworks 100 at a time, miners have been forced to find other ways of stopping them. There has been a spate of sabotage and attacks on scab lorries and lorry depots in South Wales.

The strike has gone way beyond the trade union structure as it has become more and more politicised. It has involved the whole mining community brushing aside deep traditions of prejudice and chauvinism. The women of the mining communities have been the backbone of the strike. Apart from the organisation of welfare and support groups, women have engaged in mass pickets, undertaken countrywide fundraising

FROM THE MINERS' UNION OF NICARAGUA AFFILIATED TO THE SANDINISTA WORKERS' CONFEDERATION

TO: BROTHER MINERS OF GREAT BRITAIN

Dear Comrades, A revolutionary Sandinista greeting from the mineworkers of Nicaragua. Through this letter we, the miners of Nicaragua, would like to assure you of our solidarity with the struggle you are waging in your country to win trade union democracy to sustain your struggle without your rights being suppressed.

Brothers, we would like to tell you not to lose heart; right and reason will win through when there is a willpower as strong as yours.

We know you are confronting reactionaries, conservatives and right-wingers led by the IRON WOMAN - MARGARET THATCHER - but your struggle is just, and being just will win, as the old reactionary structures of capitalism are swept away by the incontestable force of the revolutionary and progressive ideas of the organised and conscious working class, guided by the best sons of the proletariat.

Forward, Brother British Miners! Your brother miners in Nicaragua support your just struggle, a struggle which will be long, cruel and full of sacrifices, but we say to you, brothers:

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES
VICTORY IS CERTAIN
'FREE COUNTRY OR DEATH'

signed ENOC CASTELLON
for the Union of Mineworkers 'Pedro Roque V.', El Limon Mine, Nicaragua



Police cordon in front of coke works at Orgreave

and speaking tours. So desperate has the state become that a London printer taking food up to Notts mining villages was beaten up by police. Others collecting food and money for the miners have been threatened with arrest, and arrested in some cases, in order to stop support for the strike. The strength of the women has, however, defeated these ploys of the ruling class; they play equal, and frequently leading roles in the organisation of the struggle. 'I've seen the change coming for years; but the last few weeks have seen it at its best. If we have arguments at home now, it's about who's going on the picket line and who's going to babysit'. (Miners wife speaking at Barnsley rally of women's support groups on 12 May.)

SCOTLAND

In a Fife pit village in Scotland 140 children from a local secondary school superglued their teachers in the staff room, and then marched down to the picket-line with a banner proclaiming 'We support our fathers'. Police attempted to turn them back but at that very minute the lorries with coal went past - the children blocked the road and threw paint on to the windscreens, immobilising one lorry.

The miners are also having to learn how to defend themselves against the criminalisation tactics of the police and courts. Day after day they have faced illegal arrests and road blocks, magistrates courts which impose blanket bail conditions, curfews, hindovers and even imprisonment. They have had to learn the hard way that duty solicitors are hand in glove with the police and the magistrates and that they need lawyers who are willing to mount an effective challenge to the courts. The NUM has been painfully slow to provide the legal and political back-up vital if the miners are to defend their democratic rights.

JOHN STUBBINS NETWORK



Miners build a barricade to stop the police charges

Victory to the miners

Olivia Adamson, David Reed, Maxine Williams

David Kitson

defiant and free after 20 years in apartheid gaols

FRFI: What was the political background to your arrest and trial? What was the situation in South Africa, what was the state of the political struggle at the time?

DK: One must go back to before 1960. The Treason Trial, which had 156 accused, came to an end with success for the defendants and this released a surge of energy upon the South African scene. All these people got moving again. The pass burning campaign took place led by Chief Luthuli and this culminated in demonstrations all over the country, in particular with the shootings at Sharpeville - officially 69 people killed, and more than 100 wounded - and of course there were similar demonstrations in other parts of the country, for instance in Langa near Cape Town I believe 11 people were killed. A state of emergency was declared, the army was called out. They banned all the organisations in South Africa which were opposed to the rule of apartheid and drove them either out of existence or underground.

Now the ANC had played really a non-violent role in South African affairs until then. As you might remember, Chief Luthuli was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. But after March 1960 really they were now outlawed so there was a long period of discussion in which a lot of people participated - the people in the movement - and they came to the conclusion that there was no alternative to armed conflict. And so Umkhonto we Sizwe was set up. Its first action took place on 16 December 1960, with an explosion going off and a lot of people putting up posters throughout Johannesburg and other places announcing its formation.

I myself wasn't involved in Umkhonto then. I was a member of the Communist Party organisation which supported these activities, and engaged in the usual sort of illegal political activity which was current at the time. I was asked to volunteer for Umkhonto and did so. This was because of my technical knowledge as a mechanical engineer and as a former sapper in the South African Army during the second world war. After that one thing led to another, until I wound up on the national high command.

Imprisonment

FRFI: After your trial you became a prisoner of the South African regime. Were you allowed to mix with other prisoners?

DK: Well, not for the first few days. But that was just before I was classified. They had a system of classification. I was placed in common with all the other white political prisoners in this gaol in the bottom classification - namely D group. So there was always a group of white male political prisoners held together. We were held separate from prisoners of other races and, of course, separate from the female prisoners.

There were about 24 political prisoners of different political persuasions, either liberal or left, and some more left than the others. But we formed a single community and we decided that what happened before was secondary to what was happening to us now. We decided to look after each other. We appointed a committee. This first committee consisted of three communists, and I was made the chairman of the committee. Of course the reason why we were elected was that the overwhelming number of prisoners were communist. You



We welcome David Kitson who came to Britain on 20 June after his release from an apartheid gaol. David Kitson spent over 20 years in prison because of his stand against apartheid. He has pledged to continue that struggle until liberation. Below we print extracts from an interview which he gave to FRFI.

could be on it for 2 years, after that you had to stand down for a year, and this meant that there was a rotation so that a little clique couldn't seize hold of it.

FRFI: What effect did you have on the prison regime initially?

DK: Well one would more likely say what effect they had on us, because they had decided to hold us incommunicado. They decided to treat us fairly harshly. Whenever any warder shouted or beat the regulations a little we would have a discussion about it and take some action against it. For instance, at first we were held in our cells all day and allowed out for half an hour in the morning, half an hour in the afternoon, during which time we had to shave or shower or whatever. So one of the prisoners who had been there longer than the rest of us - went in to see the officer commanding and he immediately instituted extra opening of the cells so we could shower and so on early in the morning.

But it went on all the time, and gradually we became notorious throughout the prison system and they couldn't get warders to come and work with us because it would blight their careers, you see, because these complaints would go onto their files.

FRFI: Was D group a particular classification or applied only to political prisoners?

DK: No. It applied to everybody. But in general at that time D group was just for people who had committed offences in gaol, like trying to escape or getting engaged in a fight with a warder. In other words, it was a punishment category within the gaol. But they made an exception in our case and put us all in it. And that meant that I was allowed one letter every 6 months and to send 1, and allowed one visit every 6 months from 1 person for half an hour.

After we had been in prison for about a year we were moved into the Central Prison that was for long-term prisoners and recidivists, people with records. It was a high security prison. The other prisoners in a way cherished us because although they were offenders against the society instead of the state, nevertheless they were against the government because of the way they had been treated.

If Umkhonto we Sizwe blew up something they quite fancied that and so they tended to look after us, and of course we had an effect upon them. This caused the policy of the department to crystallise and we were shifted back to Pretoria Local prison while they built a new prison specially for us. Then 4 years after my initial gaoling we were shifted to this new prison where we remained for about 10 years before anything happened. Their policy initially was not to promote us to the top group, that is to say A

group, until the last 6 months of our imprisonment, but we made such a continuous uproar about that in every possible direction that we were all promoted on the same day to A group regardless of our previous prison record or our behaviour in prison. Then, we were entitled to the maximum number of visits, the maximum number of letters, and were allowed to buy groceries and so on. Life became rather easier.

On the condition of women prisoners

The women have a harder time than the men, and their conditions are worse. I'll give you an example of what's happening currently. A husband and wife are awaiting-trial prisoners (on remand). Their trial is going to start in August. They are having meetings with their lawyer, and they both go to these meetings. The husband comes back to prison and has a cup of tea with his warder, but his wife goes back to the women's prison and she is stripped completely, made to lie on a table, has to open her legs to undergo an internal search. It's nonsense you know, they're surrounded by warders all the time when they meet with their lawyer. The wife is dealt with in a worse manner than her husband. And that's just one example of what goes on all the time with the women.

On the current situation in South Africa

FRFI: You spent 5 weeks in South Africa after your release. Could you tell us your impressions of the new movements which have emerged there?

DK: Certainly. I don't know that they are so much 'new' as a rejuvenation. Immediately after my release a young chap came and collected me and took me around and introduced me to many young people who are deeply involved in the movement, and are leading it to some extent, and some of the old people. They described to me what was going on and I visited their premises. I attended meetings, and really a tremendous campaign is developing in South Africa at the moment. They tell me it started about 18 months ago. And you now have a lot of young people who don't give a damn for the consequences. They're going to do their best to protest against the new constitutional proposals for instance. There is an organisation in South Africa known as the United Democratic Front and it is sweeping the country; there's no doubt about that.

On Sunday 16 June when I was still in Johannesburg, in Johannesburg alone there were 10 public meetings to commemorate the Soweto uprising and all over the place there were posters stuck

up by supporters of the UDF. Wherever you went you saw these posters opposing the constitution and calling on people to support the petition. They are trying to get a million signatures of people who oppose the new constitutional proposals.

I was told that so far as students and schoolchildren are concerned, there is a lot of activity on the go and they are all very energetic.

And there's a lot of activity on the trade union front, not only just for the improvement of living conditions of the trade union members, but also in South Africa there's a completely different situation from here, where the trade union movement has its niche. In South Africa blacks have no say in the political process, and some trade unions realise that they must give voice to the political feelings of their members as well. So they engage in political activity such as support for the UDF.

Solidarity in Britain

FRFI: What would you look for in terms of solidarity in Britain?

DK: We would call for support of course for the ANC and SWAPO and for the UDF and Release Nelson Mandela campaign. There are Release Mandela Committees all over the country, too. They are also very active. And support for the activities of SAAWU, which is the South African Allied Workers Union.

FRFI: What effect did the activities of the solidarity movement in Britain have on your struggle in South Africa and in particular how did it affect you as political prisoners?

DK: Well, of course there were continual calls for my release. There was continued interest and pressure from Britain, which meant that they had to be more careful in their dealings with us than with other prisoners who were forgotten completely by the whole of society. And I think it also had an effect in the improvement of our conditions of imprisonment - latterly the activities of the City Group in particular. We were shifted to the condemned section at the beginning of 1980. They were rebuilding the prison we were in and, well, we just tended to languish there. The activities in Britain certainly helped.

FRFI: So the 86-day picket did have an effect...

DK: That is right. A high prison official told me that we had been moved 6 months earlier than they had intended, but 6 months later than we should have been moved, according to him. So it had an effect. And it certainly had a tremendous effect on our morale. Certainly amongst the prisoners, I found unanimous praise for such activities.

FRFI: The prisoners knew about it, did they? It was all in the newspapers?

DK: Oh yes, well, we were getting newspapers then. South African papers are very sensitive about what goes on in other parts of the world concerning South Africa so they used to report this, and we used to follow it.

You know, they used to sob tears for poor old Marais Steyn! [South African Ambassador to Britain at the time of the 86 day picket in 1982] There is no doubt it was very encouraging for us. Of course, you people didn't start the campaign, we did, in gaol. We didn't like where we were and started to press for our removal. When there is simultaneous pressure outside that is a great help. It certainly had an effect on our removal back to a more modern prison, a more comfortable prison designed for long-termers, and certainly in my case I couldn't have faced another winter in the condemned section. It was dreadful there.

FRFI: You attended the picket outside South Africa House last week. What were your impressions?

DK: It was a very inspiring moment for me and I think it's great that the City Group should be involving a wide section of the British population in activities which are really in support of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. I understand many Labour councillors are going to get arrested shortly. I think that sort of involvement is excellent. I hope it spreads to all sections of the British labour movement.

FRFI: Undoubtedly the struggle against apartheid and the support of the solidarity movement in South Africa has got tied up now with the struggle for democratic rights in Britain.

DK: Since my early days it was always

Apartheid Murder

On 28 June, Mrs Jeanette Schoon and her six-year-old daughter, Katryn, were instantly killed by a parcel bomb at their home in Lubango, Angola. Jeanette Schoon was an active SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions) and ANC member, who together with her family was forced to leave South Africa in 1977 in order to continue their fight against apartheid free from the constant harassment and threats of the fascist South African security police. Her husband, Marius Schoon, and young son were not at home when the parcel bomb went off. Jeanette Schoon and her daughter are the latest victims of apartheid terrorism. The racist apartheid regime was also responsible for the murder by parcel bomb of Ruth First in 1982, the murder of Joe Gqabi, shot down in the streets of Zimbabwe, and many other ANC members and citizens of Angola and Mozambique in their murderous raids on the Front Line states. It is these barbarous acts of terrorism which the British State and its police protect when they arrest people outside the South African Embassy for 'impairing its peace and dignity'. THE MURDER OF JEANETTE AND KATRYN SCHOON SHALL SURELY BE AVENGED! Ruby Khan

Apartheid's new plans

The South African regime is offering a new plan for withdrawal from Namibia. South Africa is saying it will withdraw from Namibia if one or more of the Western Contact Group nations will take over Namibia's administration and defence. This plan was initiated with US collaboration, and is fully supported by Britain.

It is outrageous that South Africa should propose that Namibia remain a colony under yet another colonial power. The people of Namibia will not accept this. They will continue to politically resist colonialism and SWAPO will continue to fight back against the occupying regime.

It is because SWAPO is so successful in its fight back that South Africa has had to offer this proposal for withdrawal. The illegal occupation of Namibia is costing South Africa over \$1,000,000 a day. During February and March alone the Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) dealt several extremely heavy blows against the occupying forces, killing over 45 enemy soldiers and capturing large amounts of arms and equipment. Six enemy soldiers were killed when PLAN combatants were attacked by an enemy unit at Omufiya. Five enemy trucks were destroyed and 7 troops killed at Onamihongo. Odimba PLAN combatants ambushed an enemy convoy killing 15 soldiers and destroying 2 trucks. Nomosa Langa

recognised that the British people couldn't really be free themselves while the Empire existed, and it sort of works both ways, doesn't it?

FRFI: When Botha came to Britain to visit Thatcher, it appears that some kind of agreement about pickets outside the South African Embassy was made, that the pressure of non-stop pickets outside the embassy would be removed from the embassy. And it looks as though this is the reason why the pickets are now banned. Do you think it's right to fight to get back on that pavement outside South Africa House?

DK: I'm quite sure that if Mrs Thatcher had her way, all support for the ANC and the ANC itself in this country would be shut down. And it is the fight of the people which is preventing her. And the British have engaged in such fights for many years. You know, at the beginning of the 19th century there was a newspaper, called the Poor Man's Guardian, which violated the Stamp Act which was a device intended to only let the upper classes read newspapers. And some people who sold the Poor Man's Guardian in violation of the law went to gaol for a total of 10 years. But in the end the Stamp Act was destroyed and everybody read the Rights of Man. The British people always had to struggle like that. And this is certainly an encroachment upon their right to demonstration, which is a hard-earned right. It wasn't just given to them. Of course it hasn't been settled yet. We're not sure what the law is. Maybe we shall succeed in the courts.

The Pavement is Ours!

continued from page 1

they are Corrie McClean, Peter Leonard, Eddie Abrahams, Anthony Clavane and Juliet Richemont. A test case to challenge the police ban will be heard on 23 July at Bow Street Court.

Police intimidation

The police put on a massive show of force each Friday evening in an attempt to intimidate the picketers. There are coaches loaded with police and black prison vans parked round every corner. They surround the embassy with barriers and police officers yet picketers still cross the road, appear out of subways, and jump off buses in order to picket on the pavement.

The police have now stepped up their intimidation. Every week at 7.30pm the picket moves from Trafalgar Square to the police station where arrested picketers are held and carried on the demonstration until everyone is released. Ten days ago, at Albany Street police station, the police viciously attacked the protesters when they were leaving to go home. 4 people were arrested, 2 people were charged, and two black people were injured as the police dragged them 100 yards along the road to the police station. Needless to say, everyone stayed outside the police station until the 4 were released.

Protecting the terrorist embassy

The police have claimed that the ban has been imposed to protect the 'peace and dignity' of the embassy and to overcome 'inconsistency' in policing of the demonstrations. In truth the only consistent thing they have done is to protect the embassy, apartheid and its British backers. Over the years the embassy has been

JACKY S:

'Then they started on me, coz I was black, I think. They poked fun and called me names. I was called a "nigger" and they put on what they thought were "black accents" and said I should be deported... I'll be back on the picket because I refuse to be intimidated by the strong arm tactics that the police have adopted. THE PAVEMENT IS OURS AND WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED.'

exposed as a nest of spies, involved in arms smuggling, burgling and bombing liberation movement and AAM offices in London. This is the embassy of a regime which sends parcel bombs to ANC exiles, murdering women and children like Jeanette Schoon and her six year old daughter. A few weeks ago 4 people, supported by the terrorist embassy, who were due to stand trial for arms smuggling in Britain, were allowed to return to South Africa.

The ban of pickets is a political ban, as evidenced by the massive show of force on display every Friday night. Prime Minister Botha came to Britain to argue that the ANC, SWAPO and their supporters should be silenced in Britain. He did not get the agreement he would have liked because Thatcher is not in a position yet to openly attack the legitimate activities of the ANC, SWAPO and their supporters. However, the laws which will be required for this are already being prepared with the recent extension of the Prevention of Terrorism Act to cover all liberation movements and the Police Bill which seriously limits democratic rights.

In this context the ban on pickets should not be underestimated. Militant pickets have been a thorn in the side of the embassy and the apartheid regime



1. Two black picketers were dragged along the road by the police to Albany Street police station

2. Police protecting the terrorist South African Embassy every Friday night

3. More than 200 people join the picket in Duncannon Street every week

for a long time. This was reinforced by David Kitson on his release from gaol (see interview page 3) when he said that the 86 day picket outside the embassy in 1982 forced the regime to move the prisoners to better conditions six months before it was intended.

Over the last two years the police have made many attempts to criminalise the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group picketers outside the embassy - more than 30 people have been taken to court and the vast majority have been found not guilty. The most recent evidence of this was the frame-up assault charges against Andy Higginbottom (see below). The ban on pickets is the latest and most serious attempt by the police and the British state to put an end to this thorn in the side of apartheid.

Fighting apartheid

The AAM leadership has paid scant attention to the seriousness of this police action and thinks that it can prevent the ban by secret negotiations with the police. In reality, if it had not been for the Friday night pickets, the public would not have known that the police were attempting such a ban. The British state and police have shown themselves to be very determined to stop the pickets - there have been 137 arrests and, so far, five imprisonments to prove it. The police must be met with an equally determined campaign to stop them from getting away with it.

In an attempt to minimise the importance of the campaign, Cate Clarke, Campaigns Organiser for the AAM, is quoted in the *Guardian* (15 July) saying that the ban is not a result of the Thatcher Botha talks. This is not only at variance with the facts, but is an underhand attack on those defending the right of effective protest against apartheid in Britain. If the police and the British state are allowed to win a victory by banning the protests outside the embassy, they will not stop at that.

There can be no doubt that if Thatcher could get away with banning the ANC and all anti-apartheid protests now, then it would be done. During the 1970s the British state created the apparatus to crush opposition to British imperialism through its experience in Ireland. Today, the determination of the British



4. Corrie McClean being arrested on 13 July for the fifth time. She is now imprisoned in Holloway gaol until the trial on 23 July

5. The police arresting one of the picketers. The policeman poses for the cameraman.

state to smash the miners, cripple any trade union militancy, and intimidate peace protesters by the use of police brutality, the courts and a whole array of laws, is plain for all to see. Thatcher is also creating the climate to attack anti-apartheid demonstrations - the ban on pickets is just the start.

Fighting British imperialism

Comrade Oliver Tambo, President of the ANC recently spoke in London calling for increased mobilisation against apartheid in Britain - 'We want action, not rhetoric', he said. Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo of SWAPO, recently released after 17 years in apartheid gaols, told the AAM National Convention that the enemy of the people in Britain which is creating unemployment, cutting the welfare state and attacking black people is the same enemy that the Namibian people are fighting. FRFI said, after the 2 June national demonstration, that we need to step up the fight against apartheid. The pickets outside South Africa House are part of that fightback.

The striking miners have found that in order to protect their jobs they are brought into direct confrontation with the British police who are protecting the interests of the British state and British capitalists. All those who fight now for democratic rights in Britain will come up against the 'strong arm of the law'. Protesters against apartheid face these same police and their bullying tactics, because British imperialism is determined to protect its interests in South Africa. Today, fighting apartheid means in every practical sense, to fight British imperialism.

Release the Embassy 5!
Defend the right to demonstrate!
Drop the charges now!
End British collaboration with apartheid!

Frame-up exposed

On Thursday 12 July, City AA scored a victory against the Cannon Row police who have been responsible for 137 arrests outside the South African embassy. City AA's joint secretary and FRFI supporter Andy Higginbottom had charges of assaulting a police officer dismissed.

Andy was arrested on 4 March after speaking on behalf of City AA at a Youth CND rally in Trafalgar Square. The police claimed that Andy was stopped as they suspected him of being a thief on the grounds that he appeared to be a vagrant (ie not dressed in police uniform) yet he was carrying a brand new bag! Andy allegedly punched a police officer shouting 'that's for you fascists'.

Even the magistrate could not swallow these lies designed to cover up consistent police political harassment of City AA supporters. He was compelled to recognise that the police were making unprovoked arrests. He dismissed the case and awarded £517 costs against the police. Concerned that Cannon Row police may be somewhat out of control the magistrate instructed the superintendent there to advise his officers to behave in a more circumspect manner

with members of the public!

This police attempt to intimidate and criminalise political activists failed because of the organised fightback! This will not be our last victory!



PAUL MATTHESSON

NO TO BOTHA DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

A 'No To Botha Defence Campaign' has been formed to defend 17 of the 28 people arrested on the Saturday 2 June Anti-Apartheid demonstration against Botha's visit to Britain. The arrests took place when the police violently attacked a largely black section of the march led by a Caribbean Times lorry. Many of those arrested have been charged with obstruction, threatening behaviour and other similar offences.

The aims of the campaign are stated in their petition demanding that

'The charges against those arrested on June 2nd No to Botha demonstration be dropped, that the right to demonstrate peacefully in public be preserved, and that government links with and support of

the apartheid regime of South Africa be stopped.'

Recognising the common nature of their campaigns, the No To Botha Defence Campaign and the South African Embassy Picket Campaign 1984 are working together to defend the right to demonstrate.

The first trials of defendants, have already taken place. The courts, collaborating with the police, found two people guilty and gave one a fine of £50 and the other a one year conditional discharge. The campaign however continues. For further information write to the NTBDC, c/o Southall Law Centre, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middx. Or phone 574 2434

FALSE START FOR ZOLA

On 5 June 20 City AA and FRFI activists disrupted the start of a 3000m race in which Zola Budd was running. We stood up in the stands displaying the City Group banner and placards chanting 'Zola Budd runs free, Nelson Mandela in captivity!'

Zola Budd has been granted British citizenship in order to evade the boycott on South African participation in this year's Olympics. Meanwhile millions of black South Africans lose their citizenship through forced removals and in Britain hundreds of people are deported every month under racist immigration rules. The intimate relationship between South Africa and Britain is once again exposed.

An alliance of police and security people moved in quickly to silence us. Their efforts at reasonableness (you've had your say now sit down) rapidly and predictably turned to aggression. A plain-clothes policeman grabbed Ruby, who was using the megaphone, and pulled her back over her seat. The banner and megaphone were seized and other comrades were forced up the steps. It was noticeable that they picked on black comrades and the smallest first! Ruby's wrist was twisted and when another woman called out the police numbers she too was seized.

As we were forcefully 'escorted' out, we called out to people to witness the police collaboration with apartheid. The police were thrown off their guard by our organised resistance to their harassment and released us without charge.

Zola Budd runs for apartheid. Her British origins are irrelevant. Our actions challenge British people to recognise that Zola is a pawn in the manoeuvrings of a sophisticated public relations machine designed to prettify apartheid. Politics is in sport, like it or not, and we shall continue to fight to expose apartheid's ambassadors on the track and elsewhere.

Self defence is no offence Defend the Newham 7

Seven Asian youth from Newham face conspiracy and affray charges for defending themselves and their community from racist attacks. On Saturday 7 April there were a series of racist attacks on Asian people in the Upton Park and Forest Gate areas of Newham. These included a particularly vicious incident where a partially disabled 16 year old Asian youth was dragged into a car, taken to Wanstead Flats and assaulted with a hammer. The attacks which continued throughout the day were orchestrated by white racists drinking in the Duke of Edinburgh pub. When Asian youth fought back against the racists in the pub who were hurling billiard balls, the police arrived almost immediately and arrested one of the Asian youth. Over the next week the police arrested more Asian youth. Five of the seven arrested had to spend weeks in remand as the police refused them bail on the grounds they were still preparing their case.

The police who systematically aid and abet racist attacks on black people are once again attempting to criminalise black people defending themselves against racist attacks. The real conspiracy is that of the police and those in authority who collaborate with racists' attacks on black people and harass and arrest the youth who fight back in self defence. These latest police charges follow on from those against the Newham 8 in 1982 when black youth similarly attempted to defend themselves against racist attacks in the area.

The youth are determined to fight back in defence of the Newham 7. For further information contact Newham Youth Movement, c/o PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London, E7 (phone 01 555 8151)

Stop the threatened deportation of Viraj Mendis to Sri Lanka

HERE TO STAY HERE TO FIGHT

Viraj Mendis (otherwise known as Malik) has lived in Manchester for 11 years and is now settled here. As an FRFI supporter he has been actively involved in anti-imperialist campaigns and against all Immigration controls, and has worked consistently with Manchester Irish Solidarity Committee (MISC) since its formation.

Deportation threat

On 23 May he was visited by two plain clothes police who demanded his passport. He was interviewed at Bootle Street police station two days later and his passport was confiscated. We are now seriously concerned that he will be deported.

Viraj came to Britain at the age of 17 to continue his studies. In 1975, due to shortage of money he had to leave his studies and work as a labourer; as a result he could not renew his student visa. 8½ years later, the Home Office decided to take action against him.

Immigration controls are racist

Approximately 50 Black people are



deported from this country every week. British immigration controls are an attack solely on the rights of Black people. This is clearly exposed by the granting of citizenship within 10 days to Zola Budd, a product of the white South African regime; whereas Viraj, resident for 11 years and an active supporter of anti-racist campaigns, is threatened with deportation.

Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan President who visited Britain recently is the leader of an extreme right wing regime backed by Britain and the US which has launched genocidal attacks on the minority Tamil people and which is now imposing

vicious repression on all progressives. Recently the Sri Lankan government stated their intention to deny entry to Dave Nellist, a Labour MP on a visit to investigate Human Rights violations.

Viraj says 'I am totally opposed to the Sri Lankan regime that brutalises the Tamil people'. His deportation to Sri Lanka by British government is in effect handing over a political activist that they do not want, to be dealt with by a repressive British-backed government.

A defence campaign has been established on an open democratic basis to secure the right of Viraj Mendis to stay in Britain. The first committee meeting was very successful and attended by over 40 people. Wide support is being built up with affiliations from many organisations. Thousands have already signed the campaign petition including Arthur Scargill, Sid Vincent (NUM), Anwar Ditta, Ken Livingstone and Paul Boateng (GLC), Eddie Newman and Barry Seal (MEPs), Bob Litherland, Tony Benn, Joan Maynard, Lewis Carter-Jones, Bob McTaggart, Chris Smith, Dennis Canavan, Harry Cohen, Max Madden (all MPs), Graham Stringer (leader Manchester City Council), Trevor McDonald (ITN Newscaster).

The Home Office will be determined to speed Viraj's deportation through, but this campaign can win! We urge all organisations and individuals to join us immediately and send donations (cheques payable to VMDC). Organisations can affiliate to the VMDC for a fee of £5.00.

For further information of the campaign's activities, for leaflets, posters and petitions, write to VMDC c/o Box 38, 434 Corn Exchange Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN or phone MANUS 061 273 5947

BL WORKERS FIGHT RACISM

A strike began on 25 May involving 300 Transport and General Workers Union members at British Leyland's Longbridge plant. It was in response to the sacking of a black comrade, Zedekiah Mills, after he hit a foreman who provoked him with racist abuse. Zedekiah Mills stated 'I feel it is disgraceful of the management to sack me. The man called me a "dirty black bastard". People spat in my face and the management did nothing'.

BL was obviously shocked by the solidarity shown by Zedekiah's comrades which stands in stark contrast to trade union leaders who are quite willing to allow racism to rear its ugly head in work places throughout the country. By Friday 8 June the strike was costing the company £10m. Yet the management still refused to re-instate Zedekiah Mills. Despite numerous statements from the workers the management insisted that foreman Brian Brassington did not use racial abuse. The management showed that they had no wish to see racism stamped out of their plants, and were willing to lose millions of pounds worth of production to keep Zedekiah sacked.

By 9 June 16,500 men were laid off and the strike began to bite even more

severely. However by 15 June the transport drivers' strike ended with the union planning to ask for an investigation by the Commission for Racial Equality and considering legal action for unfair dismissal. However it is obvious to see that the strike has been defeated. The CRE is a tool of the state used to channel people's anger against racism into paperwork and bureaucracy and has achieved absolutely nothing to aid black people. As for taking the case to the legal courts, Zedekiah Mills stands little chance as the courts are blatantly anti-union and racist. However it must be noted that the workers fought racism at BL and the speed with which they took action is promising.

Anwar A

● Josie Thomas - Victory!

After a five year campaign against the Home Office, Josie Thomas has won her fight against deportation. The Immigration Appeal Tribunal in London overturned a previous decision by a Leeds adjudicator that she should be deported to Grenada. It was the strength of the campaign in support of Josie that made the victory possible. Josie herself has said 'Without the support of all these people I would have cracked'.

Josie, who lives with her family in Huddersfield, now joins other local people such as Jasinder Kaur, Halimat Babamba, the Dams and the Leong family who have fought and won battles against deportation. The lesson is clear: organised campaigns which win public support can defeat the racist Home Office. David Jackson

● Cirus Noor - Home Office and prison authorities' attack continues

The Home Office and prison authorities are continuing their vicious campaign against Cirus Noor, a young black man, serving two years and four months in Wandsworth prison. On 24 April Cirus was forcibly given modicate (a behaviour modification drug). The next day the Home Office claimed that Cirus had been certified 'mad' under section 47 of the Mental Health Act. On 25 June three friends visited Cirus. He was taking amiridin tablets on being told that he would suffer severe withdrawal symptoms from the modicate. The drug makes him drowsy. His memory is affected and at times he cannot properly control his limbs. The prison is attempting to transfer Cirus to a mental hospital. If they succeed he could be detained indefinitely.

FRFI urges all readers to protest to the Home Office, Prison Department, 89 Ecclestone Square, London, SW1, and to send messages of support to Cirus Noor, B63620, HMP Wandsworth, PO Box 757, Heathfield Road, London SW18 3HS. Sarah Moore

● Police racist attack

Ace Kelly, of BNHDC, was once again attacked by racist police on Sunday 10 June. Returning home with his daughter Simone, he was set upon and violently arrested by Kennington Road police. The police claimed they were looking for a missing child who is three years old and plump. Simone is six and slim. There was no resemblance except that both children are black. A bystander phoned an FRFI supporter whose number Ace shouted out as he was being dragged away. This prompt action allowed FRFI to organise rapid legal, medical and other support for Ace. Not content with arresting and assaulting Ace and terrorising a six year old child, the police also harassed Simone's mother Susan. They informed Susan that her child had been abducted, causing her great anguish. Despite finally admitting that Ace had not abducted any child, the police charged him with obstructing the police! His case comes up on 23 August at Horseferry Road Magistrates Court London SW1.

● Police hands off Junior Service

The police persecution of Junior Service continues. On 5 June, Junior's neighbour witnessed eight police break into his flat and turn it over, the second such break in two months. Since February the police have badly beaten up Junior three times - in Brixton police station (after which Junior had a five hour operation and a testicle removed), in his hospital bed and in the police van taking him to court. The Department of Public Prosecutions has refused to prosecute the police for this brutality. The police however have charged Junior with assaulting the police or criminal damage to police property. Brixton police, are of course famous for their speedy implementation of Lord Scarman's proposals for community policing. For Junior, as with black people in general, community policing is a living nightmare of police sadism and brutality.

Junior is fighting back. The Junior Service Support Campaign can be contacted at c/o 8 Camberwell Green, London SE5 (01 703 1906/7)

KINNOCK ATTACKS BLACK SECTIONS

Black Labour Party members attempting to form black sections to combat racism within the Party are being attacked by the racist Labour leadership. Just before the 300 strong first National Conference of Black Sections of the Labour Party, Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley and Gerald Kaufman launched a concerted attack against black sections. They denounced the idea as 'divisive' and 'serving the continued fostering of racist attitudes'. Hattersley, displaying racist chauvinism rejected an invitation to address the conference and said that black sections were really about 'six fanatics'.

This response is not surprising. The Labour leadership is happy to use black members to capture black working class votes, but refuses to recognize the right of black people to organise against racism in the Labour Party where they are denied any meaningful political role. Given Labour's racist record, the last thing the leadership wants is any organised force of black people exposing it. In government, the LP introduced the 1968 Immigration Act which removed the right of British passport holders to enter Britain unless they were white. In 1974-1979 they implemented the 1971 Immigration Act, used disgusting 'virginity' tests and employed the police to carry out blanket raids of factories and restaurants in searches for 'illegal immigrants'. The 1979 Labour Government was responsible for using 5,000 police to defend an NF meeting in Southall where they launched a massive attack on black people, arresting 800, injuring 1000 and killing Blair Peach. Within the LP, black people have been suspended or expelled for challenging racism. James Hunt, a black councillor from the West Midlands, who opened the Birmingham conference, was suspended for just say-

ing there were racists in the LP. In London Dr Zafar Malik was expelled from the party when he exposed Hoe LP branch's refusal to admit black members.

At the Birmingham conference black LP members made clear that they would not bow to the leadership. A speaker declared, 'Neil Kinnock may not like it, Roy Hattersley may not like it, Gerald Kaufmann may not like it, but I have news for them. Black sections are here to stay'.

In the fight against racism, black people have a right to organise in whatever way they see fit. The Labour leadership's opposition to black sections is a reflection of the opportunists' fear and contempt for the self-organisation of the oppressed, and is a filthy concession to the racists within the LP. Whilst recognising that the vast majority of black people can have no faith in the racist and imperialist Labour Party and that any effective struggle against racism within it must lead to a direct struggle against the LP itself, FRFI condemns those who are seeking to prevent black people organising themselves in the Labour Party.

Ken Hughes



● One story *The Sun* scum won't be printing of drunkenness on the picket lines is the one about the 30 Manchester police sent home from their duties intimidating miners in the Midlands.

An Inspector, three Sergeants and 26 Constables were withdrawn by Chief Constable 'Holy Roller' Anderton after they 'drank to excess in local pubs, disturbed and abused officers sharing their accommodation in an aircraft hanger (the privations!) and became so inebriated they were unfit for duty next day'. Hence the old expression 'As drunk as a pig'.

● Ten years of marriage to a Ministry of Defence policeman was finally too much for Jenny Williams. Mrs Williams has taken the admirable step of joining the Greenham Common peace women, with whom she now faces her husband across the barbed wire of the perimeter fence. 'I would have parted any way', said Mrs Williams, 'but the peace women helped me by giving me the support and strength to leave'. Her policeman ex-husband's comments have so far gone unrecorded (who would have listened to them anyway?).

● A microphone placed in a Christmas tree was the last thing Detective Inspector Peter Lewis expected when he went to collect a £1,000 bribe in return for recommending bail for a man accused of bank robbery.

The unwanted Christmas present turned up in the form of a tape recording of Lewis' bribery request at the trial of John Goodwin (later acquitted). Lewis, suspended for two years, came to trial last month and was convicted of plotting to obtain money corruptly. The judge, despite expressing astonishment that the maximum sentence he could impose on a bent cop was two years, inexplicably proceeded to sentence him to only 18 months.

● As the summer season comes in a lot of people go back to nature in the sunny resorts of St Tropez, Majorca, etc. Not Detective Sergeant Derek Rolfe. He was arrested after complaints of a naked man 'frolicking about' in Blackpool. After being alerted he sped off in his car.

Rolfe was caught and charged after a high speed car chase in which his car and two police cars were written off. He's been charged with a drink driving offence. Unlike all the other Rotten Apples, this one has been sacked from the force.

Andy

● An ex-policeman who was found unsuitable for the job because of his anti-social behaviour shot his father, two brothers, a friend and himself after watching a news bulletin last December. Graham Green of Croydon, had a brainstorm after he heard about the bombing of Harrods. His youngest brother, the only one to survive the shooting, said 'Graham seemed preoccupied with world tragedies'. Green, who was a member of Croydon Shooting Club also stored an arsenal of weapons in his bedroom. The police force lost a good community policeman when they let Graham Green slip through their fingers.

Lorna Morgan

ITALIAN STATE MOURNS A FRIEND

The death of wealthy ex-Count Enrico Berlinguer, leader of the opportunist Italian Communist Party, brought tributes from the Italian Christian Democratic Party. The entire Italian cabinet attended his funeral, where president Pertini kissed his coffin. It is hardly surprising these reactionaries mourn his passing - throughout his 12 years as Communist Party leader he spent his time supporting working class austerity, stirring up anti-sovietism and backing increased state repression. As one of the main founders of Eurocommunism, he argued that the boring, old ideas of Lenin - things like defending working-class living standards and opposing imperialism - should be replaced by a new, 'creative' Marxism - creating a job for himself in a bourgeois government, mainly. His 'Historic Compromise' with the Christian Democrats fell through when he didn't get his job, and was replaced by the 'Democratic Alternative', but the reactionary politics stayed the same. Count Berlinguer supported Italy's membership of NATO, and backed the pro-imperialist Solidarity union in Poland. The Communist Party organised demonstrations in support of Solidarity, but they found it difficult to get workers to go on them, and many of those who did preferred to chant against US involvement in El Salvador, much to the annoyance of Communist Party stewards.

On the eve of Berlinguer's funeral 71 left-wing activists got a total of over 500 years on vague charges in a political showtrial based on repressive legislation the Communist Party had supported. 8 got over 14 years for 'subversive association'. The Communist Party called the sentences 'balanced', an opinion its newly ex-leader would no doubt have shared. When reactionaries disguised as communists such as Berlinguer die the state may mourn, but anti-imperialists and genuine communists will shed no tears.

Colin Thom

ABOLITION OF GLC

On Thursday 28 June Thatcher's campaign to abolish the GLC and other Metropolitan Councils received a serious setback from the House of Lords. The Local Government Interim Provisions Bill (Paving Bill) designed to abolish elections due in 1985 was too much even for this unelected assembly of the privileged and the bought off. By a majority of 48 votes the House of Lords passed an amendment which effectively prevents the government from transferring political control of the Metropolitan councils from the elected Labour leaderships to unelected Tory leaderships.

Despite this defeat the government is still planning to prevent the 1985 elections taking place by extending the life of the present administrations. All the evidence, from opinion polls to the EEC election results in London, shows widespread popular opposition to the government's plans. Therefore the 1985 elections, which would reflect this opposition, are to be banned. In an attempt to further control the GLC before abolition, amendments requiring government permission for all building and engineering works over £250,000 and all others (including publicity) over £100,000, have now been introduced.

When Londoners voted for the Fares Fair policy, the courts intervened to overturn that policy. Now the government has abolished London Transport and replaced it by London Regional Transport. LRT has already announced projected fare increases of 22% and reductions in financial support. The consequence of this will be higher fares, fewer public transport services and massive job losses. No one voted for this. The LRT developments already show what is in store for people living in the Metropolitan areas - more poverty, fewer services, more slums, higher rents and more unemployment. Yet again it is clear that in British imperialist democracy you can vote for what you like but the ruling class will decide what you get.

Terry Marlowe

THE TRADE UNION BILL

The new trade union bill now going through the House of Lords is a blatant attempt by the ruling class to shackle the organised working class, and destroy the little fighting spirit alive in the trade union movement.

Learning their lessons from the miners' strike the Tories are going to make it illegal for a trade union to call a strike unless there has been a ballot of the membership, and a majority support the strike call. Tom King, the 'employment' secretary, whilst address-

SAKHAROV AND BONNER CIRCUS

In recent weeks United States officials have been busy denying all knowledge of any plans by Elena Bonner and Andrei Sakharov to stage a 'hunger strike' under cover of which Elena Bonner was to seek 'asylum' at the US Embassy in Moscow.

The *New York Times* however has reported that State Department officials have now admitted that Elena Bonner had indeed passed on such plans to the staff of the US Embassy. It has been revealed that on 12 April a member of the staff of the US Embassy met Elena Bonner, discussions were held inside a car and letters were exchanged. Now that the dirty lies of the imperialists are out in the open the USA is dodging and feeding the press with claims that the US actions were motivated by 'humanitarian considerations'.

We were told that Bonner's condition was 'dramatic' and 'hopeless'. Elena Bonner was also said to be under arrest and being denied medical treatment.

The reality of course is very different; both Bonner and Sakharov receive free medical treatment just like any other Soviet citizen. At Bonner's own request she was examined by Doctor Gelstein, head of the Diagnostic department of the Institute of Cardiovascular Surgery at the Academy of Medical Sciences. Dr. Gelstein said 'as a result of age factors, the patient suffers from a degree of coronary insufficiency. More than a year ago she had a local myocardial infarction. Her condition has stabilised since then and I did not notice any wor-

sening of her condition. The patient's state is satisfactory.'

Contrary to western media reports, Elena Bonner has therefore received the necessary treatment, free of charge.

Elena Bonner however also claims that the eye ailment from which she suffers can only be treated in Italy! Bonner was in fact operated on in the past at a private Italian Ophthalmological clinic and according to Soviet specialists the operation left a crude scar on the eye. One major authority on such eye ailments, EF Pristavko pointed out that the operation was a simple one and is carried out at ordinary Soviet eye clinics.

The plans with the US Embassy then for the 'hunger strike' have collapsed and Bonner's 'ill health' has been shown to be an invention in order to fan the fires of anti-Sovietism and launch a smear campaign against the Soviet Union.

In stark contrast not a single word has been said about Leonor Peltier, who has been on hunger strike for six weeks in an American jail. Mr Peltier's 'crime' is that he is one of the leaders of a struggle by the American Indians to achieve basic human rights! This silence of course is typical imperialist hypocrisy. They care no more for the struggle of this leader and what he represents than the British imperialists did for the ten Irish hunger strikers who were murdered by the British state.

Leon Martin

ing the 'Conservative Trades Unionist Conference' actually put forward the proposal that a majority of the whole union membership should vote in favour of a strike before it could be legal. But this idea is at the moment too extreme even for this Tory government. It would mean it was virtually impossible to call a legal strike. On a turnout of 80% it would need 70% voting in favour of a strike to have a majority of the whole union membership. If unions refuse to call a ballot and went on strike they will lose their immunity and the union's funds will be frozen.

To give the ruling class an even greater chance to get the result they want any vote can be challenged in the courts by a member of the union. The court can then order a postal ballot and nullify the previous ballot.

Len Murray, after leading a TUC delegation in talks with Tom King said, 'we were discussing different subjects. We were discussing industrial relations but Mr King was making political statements.' In other words Len Murray and the TUC were attempting to play their usual role of boot-licking and compromise but the Tories had no time for them. The trade union bill is aimed at strengthening the use of the law and the courts against the organised working class. It has to be fought and opposed as a further attack on the democratic rights of working class people.

Bob Shepherd

GREENHAM TEST CASE

Out of two thousand demonstrators who brought down the fence at Greenham Common on October 29 last year, 187 of the many women arrested faced charges of criminal damage or going equipped to cause criminal damage. Now all but two of these women have been tried in Newbury Magistrates Court on individual amounts of damage less than £200. On 25 March 1984, the last two women arrived to stand trial on a charge of criminal damage of £25 to one section of the fence. Only then were they and their barrister informed that the charge had been altered to one of joint enterprise (with others unknown) in committing criminal damage of £5,397.85 to eighty-one sections. Faced with this, the two women - Gloria and Jill - elected to take their case to Reading Crown Court and now await a trial date.

This is the first time that a charge of joint enterprise has been used against a political demonstrator and would mean a dangerous precedent will be set for all activists if given credibility in court. These two women have been scapegoated for the actions of hundreds of others, and this is to deter and intimidate anyone prepared to take part in any demonstration.

Prosecution Cat-and-Mouse

The prosecution of Greenham women is selective and tactical. Women regularly invading the base and breaching security are not charged, in order to conceal the fact that such action is so frequently and easily possible. Since 1981, many thousands of women have become politically active

through indirect inspiration from Greenham and many hundreds have served prison sentences for refusing to pay fines imposed, or to be bound over to 'keep the peace'. Many women have been to prison repeatedly, although - so far - the State has hesitated to impose an immediate custodial sentence on any woman, knowing the impact on public opinion of such a move.

In the case of the 29 October demonstration, the prosecution - Ministry of Defence and Thames Valley police forces - have chosen throughout to de-emphasise the extent of the damage of that demo and to avoid publicity of the issues surrounding it by dropping or lowering charges and so containing women's defence in Newbury Magistrates Court, where the same Magistrates have sat throughout the two and a half years of the Women's Peace Camp. The unexpected escalation of Jill's and Gloria's charge and its political implications mean that they have been singled out at a time when Greenham is less in the public eye and the value to the police of a legal precedent in charging individuals for collective action has never been greater.

Greenham women are fighting back. For more information or offers to help in our campaign, please contact The October 29 Scapegoats, c/o London Greenham Office, 144 Caledonian Road, London N1. Tel: 01 833 2831/2. Donations for campaign and legal costs urgently needed - a/c: 11080864, Trustee Savings Bank, 137 High Holborn, London WC1.

Jane Marshall

POLICE FRIEND

Gerald Kaufman, Labour MP and shadow Home Secretary has been lamenting over the difficult and thankless job the British police force have to do. It seems not only are they forced unwillingly into the position of kicking and beating miners on picket lines, but, speaking at the annual tripartite conference of the Association of Chief Police Officers, Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, Mr Kaufman regretted that the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill gave the police disturbing new powers for which they are not to blame. Mr Kaufman has also expressed outrage in recent weeks that on top of all this, the Thatcher government should insult the Metropolitan police by allowing two of President Reagan's bodyguards to carry guns on his recent visit to London, thus suggesting that the tough security necessary could not be entrusted to our own home-grown British variety of security police. Mr Kaufman spoke of 'the disturbing precedent, namely, that men with guns from other countries can go roaming around our country'. So, it appears that it is all right for British policemen to go roaming around the country with guns - with Steven Waldorf's shooting, the shooting of two unarmed intruders at a post office in London on 15 June, and yet another serious gunshot injury to a bank robber with a toy gun hard on their heels, who needs to worry about foreigners with guns?

Mr Kaufman suffers from an acute dose of that sickly British Labour Party disease of trying to be more British and more loyal than the Tories. His attitude is reminiscent of Denis Healey's after US imperialism invaded Grenada when he accused Thatcher of failing in her duty to the British people, the Commonwealth, and the Palace.

When Gerald Kaufman congratulates the police for their heroism during the Harrods bombing and the St James Square siege on the one hand, and criticises the erosion of civil liberties under the Police Bill on the other hand, there is no inconsistency there. He is merely expressing the Labour imperialist 'standpoint which backs the police to the hilt while covering up their true role as defenders of the British ruling class, and sowing illusions in the possibility of democratising the police force under the present system. To think this is the character who is lined up for us as Home Secretary of a future Labour government!

Helen F

NHS: PRIVATISATION AND RESISTANCE

1984 has been a bad year for the welfare state. There are corrupt consultants who use NHS resources for private gain, or the consultant who stole plasma worth £158,000. Others extract 'legitimate' pickings: the 6,000 consultants who share £42m in annual bonuses, or the private hotel landlords who, encouraged by the government, take £200 per week from the DHSS for each elderly or mentally ill person they cram in.

The list of closures continues to grow. Under threat are leading research units, one investigating brain disorders, another - significantly - miners' lung and other industrial diseases. In 9 months, 10,000 jobs have gone, mostly from ancillary services. Although this represents over twice the government target, Social Services Secretary Fowler denies that services have been harmed. Nevertheless, Britain now spends less on health than any other western country, with the exception of Greece. The Tories have planned to privatise 25% of hospital work by 1985. So government policy allows private firms to pay below NHS scales, and thus offer cheaper contracts. After NHS laundry, catering and domestic facilities are dismantled, contractors will be able to charge what they like. And how long before nursing is put out to tender?

Trying to divide workers, the government has offered a 8.8% pay rise to nurses, against 3% for ancillaries. However, health regions must find £38m of the cost by cutting services further. Also, Tory plans to sell off nurses' homes will worsen exploitation. But the fightback, led by the health service's most oppressed workers, is spreading. Cleaners at Hammersmith and Westminster hospitals have struck in solidarity with those at Barking. Dustmen, postmen and delivery drivers have refused to cross picket lines. The courage of the women of Barking Hospital, in mounting a continuous picket since March, is a lesson to all who would resist the destruction of the NHS by private capital.

Ove Burton

JUMBO COVER-UP (Cont'd)

When Korean Air Lines flight 007 was shot down by the Soviet Air Force last September, FRFI pointed out that 'it is highly likely that the aircraft was deliberately and cynically being used by imperialist intelligence agencies to probe Soviet air defences' (FRFI 32), and went on to give details of US spy satellite and spy plane activity on that tragic night.

Further corroboration comes from *Defence Attaché*, a pro-imperialist military magazine. The author, 'P Q Mann', argues that KAL 007 was drawn into a flight path coinciding with a US KC135 spy plane, in order to get the USSR to turn on its radar and communications links. A civilian aircraft, it was assumed, would not be fired upon.

The electronic eavesdropping was carried out by a Ferret-D satellite (see FRFI 35) - and also by equipment mounted on board the Space Shuttle Challenger.

The author recalls that similar techniques were used 20 years ago by the US, shortly after the first Ferret was put into orbit. On 28 January 1964 a USAF T39 jet trainer entered the airspace of the German Democratic Republic and was shot down 70 miles inside by a Soviet fighter, while on 26 March 1964, an RB-66 reconnaissance plane was shot down 50 miles north of the previous intrusion. On both occasions the area was under surveillance by the Ferret satellite.

Steve Palmer

SAM MISSILES FOR FMLN

Since his election in May, El Salvador's President Duarte has taken some measures to end the fascist regime's international isolation. He has removed Colonel Carranza from the head of the hated Treasury Police which is closely connected with El Salvador's brutal death squads, disbanded its S2 Intelligence section, secured the conviction of 5 National Guard soldiers for the 1980 murder of 4 American nuns and pledged to 'clean up' the security forces. These steps, designed to attract bourgeois support for the fascist regime and in particular demobilise US Congressional opposition to US support for it have had some success. The US Senate recently threw out a motion which would have prohibited US army and air force intervention in El Salvador and the West German government is planning to provide the regime with \$20m aid.

These cosmetic measures have guaranteed continued imperialist support for the fascist regime and allowed it to open a major offensive to try and reverse the FMLN's decisive military ad-

vantage. With critical US assistance, saturation bombing of FMLN liberated zones is now a regular feature of the war, causing immense suffering to the peasants and workers. Electronic spy planes and surveillance equipment operated from Honduras try to intercept and disrupt FMLN communications, while US military personnel are increasingly involved in military operations on the ground. US pilots are reported to be flying bombing missions over liberated zones and the El Salvador army is being reorganised in line with the strategy proposed by US military advisers.

Whilst the imperialists will use Duarte's 'reforms' as a pretext for additional support to the fascists, the FMLN has pledged to continue its war and is preparing for its now regular October offensive. This promises to be devastating, especially to El Salvador's air force, as the FMLN have acquired supplies of SAM-7 portable heat seeking missiles for use against ground-attack aircraft and helicopter gunships. Eddie Abrahams

Panama

US COLONY

The Republic of Panama, referred to as the crossroads of the world, has proved to be just that for the USA. Small wonder that the US should have drawn up a treaty to give them sole control of the Panama canal until 1999. Under the guise of its defence the US have set up sophisticated bases and used the Republic for training in jungle warfare, and for surveillance of the region. Loss of the canal and the strategic bases of the US Southern Command would drastically reduce the mobility of US forces, weakening their hold in Central and Latin America.

Since the commencement of work on the construction of the canal in the late nineteenth century most of Panama's working class has lived in the two main cities either side of the canal zone: Panama City, the capital, on the Pacific side, and Colon, on the Atlantic side. Work on the canal or in the canal zone has tied much of this working class to US imperialism. A section of them received some privileges such as employment as pilots or engineers, access to US hospitals, to US stores on the base, and to letter boxes on the canal zone which, unlike the Republic, afforded some protection against having private mail searched or rifled.

These workers not employed directly by the US government work either in what is termed the Free Zone, where goods for trade with selected countries having 'favourable trading conditions' with Panama are handled. Others work in commercial shipping or the registration of ships where non-union seamen from oppressed nations are employed at slave-labour rates on ships that fail to meet international standards, thereby sustaining the profits of the imperialist multinationals. The remainder work in the civil or public services or join the im-

famous National Guard.

The peasantry live in the 'Interior' or on the coast, relying on cultivation or fishing for their incomes. They must travel miles along bad roads or in boats to the city markets to sell their produce. Low world prices for bananas and raw sugar, upon which the peasantry depend, has made it impossible for them to make a living from their work. In 1983 Panama's sugar exports increased in volume by 16.3% but revenue fell by 54.3%.

Such losses have forced Panama to make massive borrowings from the IMF and commercial banks. In the period 1978-82 Panama's external debt rose at an average annual rate of 16.2%, and the debt service payments have increased by 30%. External debt is now over \$3 billion, almost the size of the total annual output of Panama. In return for these loans the IMF has demanded huge cuts in public spending and intensified repression to enforce the poverty. Unemployment is officially registered at 13%, but the bulk of these are youth. Peasants fleeing the interior for the cities in search of work have faced a 50% cutback in government housing spending.

However, over 1982-83 the UK exported almost nine times as much to Panama as it imported from the country. While the total volume of trade fell, banking investments have grown automatically and British imperialism forced Panama to accept provisions for the repatriation of profits and compensation for losses in the event of armed conflict. Fittingly, Panama's national currency, the Balboa, is but a commemorative coin for Panama's first president, as all circulating notes are US dollars and the Balboa cannot be exchanged on the world markets.

Electoral tricks, political guns and clubs

The trade unions represent only those who work directly for US imperialism and the 3 or 4 wealthy families of Spanish descent that form the Panamanian bourgeoisie. The peasants have no representation in the wheels of power. Whenever they have risen up against poverty or the students against the US hold on the canal the government has resorted to crushing the revolts with the brutal force of the National Guard. It is forbidden to criticise the President of the Republic or the National Guard and to visit a communist country except on very official government business means either not returning or being found 'dead on the highway' upon return. To keep the youth off the street all persons over the age of 21 are issued with an identity card. Failure to have the card in your possession after the 8pm curfew for curfew means certain imprisonment, even sometimes death.

Any left wing opposition is severely repressed, and elections are customarily rigged. Those parties allowed to operate which seek reforms, or the curbing of military powers do not challenge imperialism for they propose no breaking with the external debt and its massive servicing charges, no plans to improve the lot of the peasantry, and no policies to benefit the poor at the expense of the rich ruling class. The oppressed are left to dream of escaping through the door of the National Lottery, yet another state money making scheme.

In a time when the revolutionary forces of Latin America are making great strides forwards the US will not relinquish its hold on the canal, or its Southern Command bases. Thus, in the May 6 presidential elections the US and the military junta backed Nicholas Arce Barletta, a former vice-president of the World Bank. His chief rival was Arnulfo Arias. Arias was the pre-1968 favourite, who, in 1968, had been elected president only to be ousted by the junta after eleven days. In fact Arias has been elected president on three occasions but has on each occasion been denied the presidency by the military. This time as it became clear that Arias was in the lead the junta started to slow down the electoral count. Angry Arias supporters gathered outside the legislative palace in Panama City on 7 May. Barletta's supporters and junta henchmen then attacked, killing one and wounding over forty of the demonstrators. The vote counting was duly suspended. Such lethal tricks are practised on every election day. The chosen result, a win for Barletta, was published two weeks later and greeted with further demonstrations and fighting. For Reagan and his US ruling class scriptwriters it was yet another 'victory for freedom and democracy'. For the Panamanian people it was just one more lesson that US run elections give the oppressed less chance than they have of winning the national lottery.

Ken Hughes



Uruguay: The city centre of Montevideo came to a standstill as over 250,000 people gathered from all over the country for Uruguay's biggest ever May day march. Speakers denounced fascist dictatorship and demanded a democratic workers' government. Relatives displayed photographs of disappeared political prisoners.

Bolivia

STORM OF REVOLUTION

Three general strikes since April have forced the Bolivian government to suspend repayments on its \$4.5 billion debt to the imperialist banks. Bold and successful tactics have been used by the Bolivian masses to force out IMF ordered austerity measures, and so challenge the right of imperialism to rob Bolivia. Ten thousand people launched a hunger strike for higher wages for all workers, price controls on food and transport and an end to debt repayments. Workers at the TV station refused to broadcast government statements. The Central Bank was occupied by the miners and employees struck for six weeks, refusing any further transfer of wealth to the imperial metropolises.

In the midst of such open revolt a faction of the army kidnapped President Siles Zuazo on 30 June intending to trigger a counter-revolutionary military coup. Peasants established road blocks to search for the President and check army movements. Thousands converged on the capital, La Paz, to join workers in a demonstration against the kidnapping and to warn against any coup attempt. Within five days of the President's release the main labour organisation, the Confederation of Workers, led a general strike commencing 5 July. After four days the government yielded to demands for increased wages, price controls and promised to continue the suspension of debt repayments, falling short of the call for an indefinite moratorium. The *Wall Street Journal* gloomily assessed imperialism's prospects in Bolivia concluding that any more coup attempts 'could plunge Bolivia into a bloody civil war'.

What Bolivia faces today portends for all Latin America tomorrow. For imperialism it is not the size of Bolivia's debt which alarms, but the political lessons being learnt by Latin America's

oppressed. Between 1979 and 1983 Latin America paid \$114bn abroad in interest payments. Last year such payments swallowed 40% of Latin America's export earnings. Three successive interest rate rises by US banks this spring added \$5bn to Latin America's scheduled debt repayments in just 40 days. More than \$100bn repayments fall due by 1987. Massive demonstrations and general strikes calling for the throwing-off of the banking leeches and the installation of democracy and justice have swept back and forth across Latin America throughout the past year. Addressing himself to Latin American statesmen and imperialists in June, Colombian President Betancur told of his foreboding, 'we hear the far-off thunder of violent storms. We feel the winds of storms.'

ROBBED UNTO PENURY

Successive raids by Spanish, British and US colonialism followed up by the manipulations of high finance and transnationals have reduced Bolivia to the

poorest country in South America. Poverty and hunger have left their marks in the 40% illiteracy and 30% infant mortality rates. A million peasants have a monthly income below half a dollar! This in a land full of precious minerals. In 1982 US capitalists dumped tin, silver and copper surpluses onto world markets, driving down their prices and slashing Bolivia's export earnings. A series of currency devaluations to try and recoup trade combined with IMF ordered removals of subsidies on food and transport, plus the unofficial currency market spawned by the cocaine trade where the dollar trades at five times the official rate with the peso have rocketed inflation from 32% in 1982 to approximately 1,000% today. The largest denomination bank note in circulation will buy just two newspapers! Imports have almost halved in two years as credit terms have stiffened, and production is shrinking by about 10% each year.

Bolivia's most profitable export is cocaine, which fetches \$8bn annually in the world market, ten times the revenue from tin. However, only a fraction of this sum, \$700m, is returned to Bolivia, the bulk is deposited in Miami banks. One captured drug baron offered personally to pay off Bolivia's debt in return for a free pardon and access to the USA.

THE CRITICAL CHOICE

For the Bolivian government, as for all the Latin American governments, faced with the conflicting demands of the

masses for bread and democracy and the bankers for interest and profits the testing time has come. Following a lengthy struggle for democratic rights, the Bolivian masses won the right to organise openly, and forced the military to give way to free elections which ended eighteen years of almost uninterrupted military rule in 1982. President Siles Zuazo formed a coalition government including Communist Party members serving as the key ministers of labour and of miners. The government has repeatedly used the threat of a military coup to try and force the CP leaders to reduce their demands and the masses to scale down their mobilisation. Thus far imperialism was encouraged. However, the upsurge since April has not been blackmailed or bailed into retreat.

Significantly, the kidnapping and coup attempt was organised by the US trained 'anti-drug unit' of the army with their fellow cocaine traffickers. These interwoven groups have the closest contact with US imperialism of all the sections of Bolivian society. Siles Zuazo and his CP allies must choose whether to side with the masses against imperialism or to seek to disarm them ready for serving-up to counter-revolution. Either way, imperialism faces one of the most conscious and organised working classes and peasantry in the world, and may find in Bolivia the spark that flares up and shrivels to ashes the deeds and bills by which it claims a debt of \$350bn of Latin American toil and slavery.

Trevor Rayne

FRFI: Could you tell us about your arrest and trial?

RMcL: I was captured in November 74 after a premature explosion in which my comrade James McDade died. During the interrogation there was no real physical abuse. The only thing I thought outlandish was that at one stage they brought out a piece of my comrade's leg and made abusive racist remarks about him. I was captured on operation. Trial was similar, it was more or less straightforward, I was convicted. Not one of those framed.

On every remand I was taken from Winslow Green Prison to Coventry every Saturday morning. There was always a massive display of security. You had three policemen on motorbikes before and after. There were two branch cars and all were heavily armed and I was handcuffed to two branch men in the back of the car. And then round the court the same security operated - massive security. I as one individual was with thirty or forty policemen round that place. And again all armed.

I was charged with causing an explosion and having a firearm with intent to endanger life. I received 12 years on each count to run concurrently. In the early days in Winslow Green it was a very tense atmosphere. You were locked up 23 hours a day. I was with 8 other lads who were arrested in Birmingham. Especially after the Birmingham bombs it was unbelievable. Food was always tampered with, you'd find spit in it, you'd find hairs, you'd find all sorts of things. I remember one occasion when for two solid days and nights they kept relays shouting 'Hang the Irish bastards'. Psychologically it was really, really heavy. We were given a couple of kickings during that period. But the physical thing, to be honest, never really bothered me. It didn't really bother most of the lads, I think. It was the psychological thing that was the most intense.

Conditions in prison

FRFI: What were the relations between Irish prisoners and the other prisoners in those early days?

RMcL: Obviously there was a great deal of hostility and mutual suspicion to begin with. They hated us because they didn't understand us or analysed us in terms of the latest Sun headline. And we in turn were greatly suspicious of them. When we went to the long-term prisons after being convicted, I think the general experience was that you'd separate into different sections of prisoners. You had the totally hostile. You had other people who are sort of indifferent and you had people who would seek to understand why you were there. In the early stage, for the first couple of years, I'd say, it was really mutual hostility.

FRFI: Were you ever attacked by English prisoners?

RMcL: Any time we were attacked or abused it was always at the behest of the screws. In fact, they tried to drive a wedge between the Irish prisoners and the rest of the prisoners, and use us as whipping boys. If prisoners were fighting among themselves then they weren't fighting the whole thing; it made life a lot easier for the screws and they could sit back and instigate the whole thing. But gradually we began to see this very clearly. The Irish prisoners, not the political ones, the ones who would be in for social crimes, usually stood with us. You could say it was part of a straightforward nationalist thing. During my whole time in prison I had a great deal of respect for Irish social prisoners.

FRFI: Irish prisoners had to fight against such things as visiting conditions and other forms of discrimination. Can you tell us about that?

RMcL: In the summer of '75 Paddy Mulryan, Gerry Cunningham, Gerry Young and myself were in Gartree. They attempted to impose closed visits on us and us alone. All other prisoners had open visits, that is to say they could sit down at a table and have their family around. We were to be separated by a perspex partition. There was no contact between the visitors and the prisoners, so we objected very strongly to this. We went to the governor and he said we would remain on them because we were high security. We explained that we were category A, and other category A prisoners were not receiving this type of visit. This was a thing they imposed upon us. So we decided to protest about it. We kicked the perspex down. We were taken then and dragged off the visit. We refused work and went on the blanket. We were on it for about a month, and we decided to go on a hunger strike. We were on hunger strike for about 3 weeks when they allowed Frank

Maguire, the MP for Fermanagh at that time, to come in and visit us. He visited us and told us that the lads in Long Lartin had gone on hunger strike in solidarity with us, Eddie O'Neill, Jimmy Ashe, Jody Coughlan and a few other lads, and they also had refused work.

After 3 weeks on hunger strike and with Maguire's intervention the governor came and said that he was prepared to put us on supervised visits. We would be put in a room with no perspex glass but you would have screws sitting in with you. It was a step forward with the proviso that in 3 months they would review it and hopefully put us on to completely open visits. We accepted this. Semi-open visits were better, we gained something for the three week hunger strike. As can be expected they went back on their word. They kept us under supervised visits through my prison sentence.

FRFI: We've heard that on many occasions prisoners would be moved just before a visit. Did that happen to you?

RMcL: It happened to me in Wakefield in '78. I was moved out of the cooler a day before Mary was due to come up. They never informed Mary. She arrived up on Saturday and I was in Durham. They held her in the prison for an hour before informing her I'd gone, saying 'we regret to tell you blah, blah, blah, that your husband has been moved out to another prison'. It also happened on the Isle of Wight in 1981. It happened with a few of the lads, Billy Armstrong and Roy Walsh, on one occasion. Their wives would come from Belfast, travel a long journey to Long Lartin only to find that the boys had been moved to the Isle of Wight, another tremendous journey for them, from the Midlands right down to the south of England. It happened I think on two or three occasions with Roy Walsh. Roy recently had a visit where, after spending 11 years in prison he was still on supervised visits and he was in Gartree on a visit. I think 4 gaolers sat in the small room with him during the visit. Now he has a visit only perhaps 2 or 3 times a year with his family from Belfast. It is a sort of a release, sort of emotional sort of binge when you get the family together and yet he found that the screws really tried to goad him. He ended up knocking one of the screws out, and he was dragged out losing his visit. That type of victimisation is reprehensible and is an ongoing thing in gaol.

FRFI: This kind of harassment extended to correspondence, didn't it?

RMcL: It did. On many occasions I had letters returned to me and they said I can't say this. I remember one particular incident. They returned the letter to me. And what I did was write it out exactly the same again and hand it out to them. It came back. On three occasions it came back. Early on they wouldn't let us have any political discussion. Anything like that was stopped. Any mention of prison conditions was stopped. And this was true right up until '81 until the verdict in the European Court of Human Rights which said that all prisoners must be given free access to whoever they wish to correspond with and vice versa any person who wished to correspond should have free access to the prisoner.

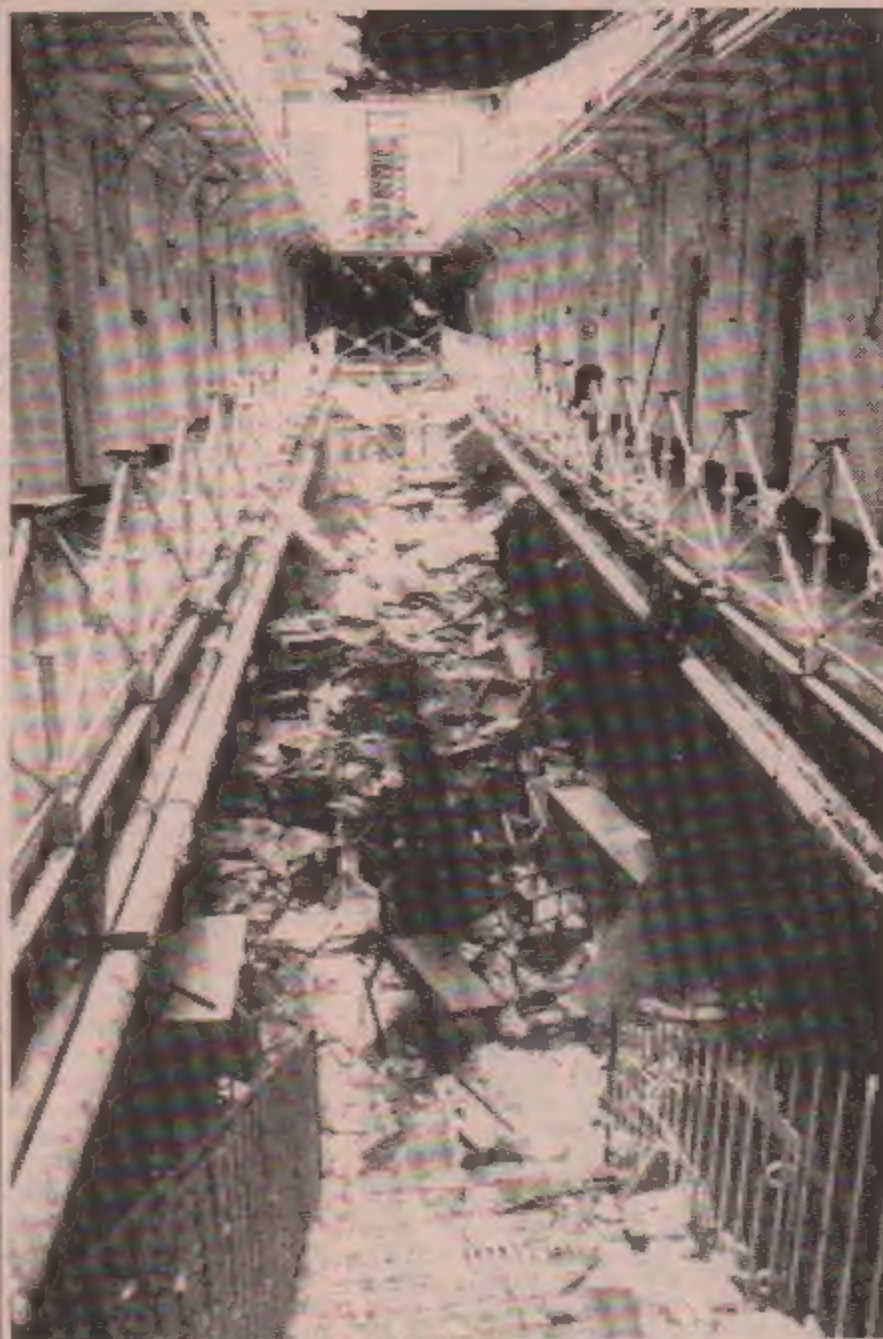
FRFI: Can you just say something about how that European Court ruling came about.

RMcL: It came about as an English prisoner took it to court. He gathered all the relevant information over a period of six years. Everybody knows about the workings of prisons, the bureaucracy of prison. You've got to see the Board of Visitors and that can take a month. You see the governor, you see the Board of Visitors and then you've got to petition the Home Office and that could take anything up to 6 months. It takes incredible stamina to carry any legal battle outside on behalf of a prisoner. There are all sorts of constraints. If you drop your proceedings we'll give you parole, if you stop kicking up, we'll give you parole, we'll move you to a prison nearer to your family, that type of thing. I think it took about 6 years before he actually got to Europe and won the case. Nobody could ever really understand the incredible amount of stamina it takes to carry out that type of case from behind walls. He must be congratulated because it was a great gain for prisoners in England.

Hull 1976 - the turning point

FRFI: It's well known that the Irish prisoners as well as defending their own rights, have also engaged in joint struggles with other prisoners. The first ma-

10 YEARS IN EN



Devastation in A wing, Hull gaol 1976

The following interview was given to FRFI on 26 May 1984 at Reamonn Mac Lochlainn's home in Buncrana Co Donegal. Reamonn Mac Lochlainn was arrested in Coventry on 14 November 1974 following a premature explosion in which his comrade James McDade died. He was released on 28 December 1983 after serving over nine years of his twelve year sentence. FRFI sends greetings to Ray and welcomes his release from captivity. All revolutionaries in Britain have admired, and been inspired by, the principled struggle of Ray and his fellow POWs in British prisons. The interview reflects that principled stand and the growing respect which the POWs have won from all prisoners in the British prison system. Welcome Reamonn Mac Lochlainn! Victory to Irish POWs! Victory to all prisoners!

for one was Hull 1976. Can you tell us something about what happened there.

RMcL: Hull, in my view, was a great turning point in relations between English prisoners and Irish Republicans.

Hull came about not as the sensationalist press would state by a flare up of emotion. It was a long process of the prison authorities taking back little privileges from prisoners. You were allowed three letters, they would cut it down to two. About six weeks later they would take a little bit off the association time. And you only had access to the gymnasium for an hour a week or whatever. That would be cut. Gradually over a period of time it came to a boiling point. At that particular time Hull had the record for putting more prisoners on report and putting them in isolation units than any other top security prison in England. More prisoners spent time in solitary confinement in Hull than in any other prison in England. Only Albany came close in that period. One day the news came from the block that a prisoner had been badly beaten. It was decided, as it is in prison by word of mouth, that there'd be a protest that evening. It wasn't expertly organised, as the press said, by the IRA or any other section of prisoners. What actually happened was a sit-down protest on the centre of D wing.

7 o'clock on that evening about 70 prisoners congregated there - a peaceful sit-down protest demanding that the prisoner be put up to see whether he was beaten or not. The Assistant Governor appeared and assured us that he was not beaten up and that it was only a rumour, etc, etc. So we demanded that he be brought up so that we could see for ourselves. If he wasn't beaten up we would go back to our cells. This was refused. About 7.55pm a screw was entering A wing and as these things happen 2 or 3 people pushed their way through into A wing and the whole mass surged into A wing and it was then going to be a sit-down in A wing, an overnight thing. But it developed further very quickly. Somebody fired a bucket of water and shouted a slogan which I didn't hear.

The next thing, probably in ten minutes, that whole wing was wrecked from top to bottom. It was incredible. The release and frustration and anger and everything else, all the pent-up emotions in prison. A wing was destroyed in 10-15 minutes and then we decided to cut through the roof. We got up on that roof and went along to the isolation room at the back of A wing. We broke in through that roof and released the prisoners in solitary confinement. We broke the doors down and got them out. This all happened in maybe about half

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an hour. The whole place was really charged up. It was incredible, the speed of events, you know, everything just happened, sort of gained momentum. Everything happened very very quickly.

Then somebody climbed up a drain pipe on D wing and 4 or 5 prisoners followed him. It was decided then that we'd tear that roof off. For no specific reason. But as it turned out, it was probably the most significant move we made that night.

It directly overlooked the centre. About half an hour later the forerunners to the MUFTI squad - they had visors, shields, batons, masks and bullet proof vests - a squad of about 60 or 70 screws came to try and retake A wing. To get to A wing they had to go through the centre, and we had the D wing roof. It was a really strategic point, and we lampooned them with all sorts of slates, bricks, everything that lay at our hands. I'll always remember the prison officer who was leading the charge said 'Retreat lads, retreat'. It was a disorderly retreat and they ran in all directions. We actually pinned two of them in a corner by themselves and every time they attempted to come out bricks were hurled at them, and slates. But eventually they did get out. None of them were injured. The great thing about this riot was it was a mass of destruction on a massive scale. It was the biggest in English history. Only one screw during that whole period was hurt and he was hurt in the hand by a flying slate. None of them were ever seriously injured. It was really frustration, prisoners being in an extremely repressive prison.

The protest lasted for about 3 days. Over that period a great comradeship built up between all prisoners, blacks, English, Irish, everybody. And truly, it was really international in a sense. There were no cliques, people mixed with each other freely. It was really as if you were released from prison and in a totally different environment, I look back on it with an immense amount of nostalgia. As far as prison is concerned that is the moment I enjoyed most, or one of the moments.

FRFI: Was it at Hull that files were discovered?

RMcL: Yes, that's right. We got files there. Really, it was probably the great-



est eye-opener for English prisoners in general that they ever got. I was sitting beside one prisoner and he was reading his own file. A 'nice' gaoler had been talking to him and telling him that he was guaranteed parole. This same gaoler was writing reports that he was now sitting there reading, saying that this prisoner thinks he's conning me. He is definitely a recidivist prisoner. If he goes out tomorrow he'll commit crime. He's a rogue. He attempts to sweet-talk prison officers because he thinks it's a short way out. Under no circumstances should he be given parole.

Another one was a Liverpool lad who was doing a five year sentence. He was having family troubles and his wife was putting immense pressure on him to go for parole, and he said he had demeaned himself by grovelling to screws, which was totally out of character. And he was again assured he would definitely get parole. He was making tea for screws which really he couldn't bear doing because being a sort of a principled fellow in many ways - he knew he was demeaning himself. But he had to do it to try and keep his family. He was sincere. But the report was this man attempts to use his family as a short way out of prison. If he was out tomorrow he would commit crime again and he's ruthless in the sense that he would use

ENGLISH GAOLS

WITH RAY MAC LOCHLAINN



A meal on the roof at Albany, 1983

anything for his own ends, which was nonsense. He was a very quiet fellow and very unassuming. Not a fellow who would play upon any weakness in anybody else.

There was a Dundalk prisoner who had become very close to the Irish prisoners. We got his record, and on his record it says that he's suspected of being a member of the IRA. He was only 2 days in the prison when he was seen talking to Martin Brady who is one of the IRA prisoners there. They built a big case around this. They condemned the man without any case whatever. He had no connections whatever with the IRA. He was an ordinary Irish prisoner.

Hull built up a comradeship, it built up a respect that was to last through the years among the militant prisoners in English gaols and the Irish prisoners. It began a great trust between them. Anything that was going to happen, any sort of protest, they could rely on each other. We realised we could rely on English prisoners for the first time. And from then on we had very few problems with militant English prisoners.

FRFI: Can you tell us how the protest ended?

RMCL: Well, after three days a functionary from the Home Office was sent and he was empowered to negotiate with the prisoners. There was no real formal leadership apparatus among the prisoners, but we decided to send a delegate from each block.

The terms were in effect that if we surrendered some time during that day he guaranteed we would not be beaten up. We would not be held for long in solitary confinement. The prisoners took them at their word. An agreement was made which later was broken. The prisoners started going down and were held on B wing which was separated from the rest of the prison. We were held there and the beatings began almost immediately. Prisoners were kicked senseless in the aftermath of Hull. Later 12 screws were charged, 8 of them convicted. Of those 8 convicted the vast majority were known as the dog squad among the prisoners. These were the really heavy crews who were used for taking people to solitary confinement. Some of them were from the solitary confinement block. These were a section who enjoy their work and that was harassing and beating up prisoners. That section is always strong in English prisons.

Albany '83

FRFI: You were in Albany at the time of the Albany protest in May last year. Could you tell us about that?

RMCL: Albany is seriously misrepresented in the English press. It was not an IRA-initiated action. It was nothing to do with drugs or drug abuse in prison. It really came about through a series of one day strikes by prisoners in the preceding 3 or 4 months about food conditions, about visiting conditions, and all the conditions in the prison, especially work conditions. There was a mail bag shop in Albany which for long term prisoners was used as a punishment shop. Anyone they don't like they stick in the mail bag shop. These things all came together and were the real reason why things blew up in Albany. Plus the fact that in those preceding 3 or 4 months there were 3 stabbings in the prison. Two of those definitely were instigated by the prison staff. We know that for a fact. Wrong information was given about an individual because he was a militant prisoner. It was leaked that he was a sex case, that he was a grass and this was leaked by screws. It turned out totally and absolutely wrong. Therefore he ended up getting stabbed, thankfully not seriously.

The protest began in the mail bag shop. There were about ten prisoners in the mail bag shop. I was one of those ten. We decided that we wanted the mail bag shop closed down because we viewed it as a degrading form of work. I personally went through prison and never sewed one mail bag and all the other prisoners in there were in for punishment reasons. The mail bags that were sewn usually were hanging in a corridor and thrown away. There was not any gain,

economically or otherwise. We decided unanimously that we were not sewing mail bags. Not only were we not sewing them but we decided to attempt through peaceful means to persuade the prison authorities to stop sewing mail bags in Albany prison.

They refused outright. I was moved out for instigating this strike. I was in no doubt again that it was an Irish Republican prisoner picked out for no other reason than my record as a Republican prisoner. The reality was that it was a unanimous decision by all prisoners. But when I was moved out, the lads organised a gaol-wide strike, not just a mail bag one, but all the workshops in the prison, in solidarity with me and in an attempt to end mail bag sewing in Albany. They had a two-day strike. Nothing came out of that.

People were fined. So 4 of the lads who were in the mail bag shop with me, jumped on the roof of the shop and ripped it off. Then there was a disturbance a day after that on B wing in which shit was rubbed on a door handle. A screw grabbed it and his hand was covered

HULL 1978: '... a great comradeship built up between all prisoners, blacks, English, Irish, everybody... It was really as if you were released from prison...'

with shit. He became enraged and turned round in the nearest prisoner and said clean that. The prisoner refused to clean it because he said I didn't put it on. It was a matter of principle. He refused to do it.

The screw ordered him to clean it and when he refused he turned to another prisoner and he refused and it sort of upped the whole tempo in the place. Next thing he pressed the bell and a stack of other screws came up. The whole thing developed from there and prisoners wrecked as much as possible of B wing.

The other wings were on exercise as this was happening. So the boys broke through to the top storey of the prison and broke the big window in an attempt to get up on the roof. The prisoners who were out on exercise here saw this. They came over and climbed up this window thing right the way to the top. Ten went up - four Irish Republican prisoners and one Palestinian and five of the militant section of the English prisoners on the roof and they had a protest which lasted for five days.

The whole thing stemmed from the conditions within the prison - very repressive conditions. These long-term prisons, the new ones, are very, very repressive. Internally they remind you of an underground tunnel. You can't see more than ten yards. I believe it definitely leads to a heightening of tension. There's no outlet. You can touch the roof. You can touch the walls each side of you. There's very little space to move, it's all cramped in. It's really like a little series of tunnels with windows on them. It must have a psychological effect on prisoners.

Then the fact that the food in Albany at the time was atrocious and the work conditions, the visiting conditions, again were very bad. There was heavy emphasis on security, not only in our visits but we were always supervised, but in three or four cases in those preceding 3 or 4 months four of the visitors were searched, strip-searched prior to going on the visits, which really did anger the prisoners - you have your family coming in and getting strip-searched. A really degrading thing. A prisoner can take that because he becomes accustomed to it. He doesn't like it. But having your relatives strip-searched can be a very heavy experience.

Wakefield Control Unit

FRFI: A lot of the prisoners spent a long time in solitary after Albany.

RMCL: Steve Blake is still in solitary one year later. Not only in solitary but he's in the worst isolation unit in the prison. He is in F wing Wakefield. F wing was taken from an American model. It was taken from a model in 1960s many where the Bender-Melton were

then. Then it came to Britain. It was designed by an architect in conjunction with a team of psychologists. They designed it for maximum isolation. For instance, the windows are about 3 foot deep. You have about six 3-inch square windows with heavy frosted glass which you cannot see through. It stops natural light coming into your cell. The only air you have are two little 3-inch squares at the bottom of the window. And that is also your only view. It's known that the brain needs a certain amount of fresh air to keep it all functioning properly. This window only allows a limited amount of air. For example, if you do any sort of training, press-ups or anything in that cell, almost immediately you begin to sweat before you've really exerted yourself, because of the density of the air. It was always dark. It was also facing north-north-west, which in effect means that you never feel the sun.

They really worked hard at trying to keep you totally isolated. You were allowed out of your cell individually only, so you never saw another prisoner. The only time you may see him is if you went

down during exercise but you couldn't communicate with him in any way.

Perhaps I can give another illustration of this point, of how it was used to disorientate. You remember the Guildford case. There was an appeal to that. The 4 people who were convicted of the Guildford bombings are totally innocent. Now when the Balcombe Street lads were captured they decided to tell true details of what happened at Guildford in order to get innocent people out of prison. So they laid out in great detail exactly how that operation was carried out, in conjunction with Brendan Dowd who was picked up in Liverpool earlier. Brendan had all the details of that operation, from A to Z. And the police knew that what Brendan had stated was true, but they did not want to release the other prisoners on political grounds.

So what they did in effect was put Brendan on the ghost train (we call it the ghost train, which means that you are literally shunted from one prison to another, one isolation unit in a prison to another). He went round probably about 8 prisons in 2 years. Local prisons, where you had no communication with any long term prisoners. Two solid years it was like this.

So at the end of 2 years he was in a very disorientated state. His whole reactions were slowed down. If you asked him a question he'd have to take it in, chew it over before he could answer it. So they brought him into the courtroom in this state, and obviously his evidence was not good. The judge said he was obviously making up the story and had not learned his lines well. And in effect what they did was ensure that he could not express himself well. He ended up in a seriously disorientated state, and ended up being used as a scapegoat to keep innocent people in prison. And that's how the British state operates with prisoners.

FRFI: You spent some time in F wing in the earlier days as well?

RMCL: Yes, in '78 I was on the blacket there for 2 months.

FRFI: What effect did that wing have on you?

RMCL: As I say, you are unable to communicate. You are unable to sit down and talk. You sit down and your reactions are very very slowed down. You do become disorientated, and it does have a bad effect on you. I ended up being unable to sleep for a period. Also it engendered a great hatred of the system.

They had a system also there where there was a little steel walking beam that ran all down the unit and every morning at 6 o'clock they used to iron the floor in a mass and that was the first thing you watched to every morning. It was bumping foot on the steel grill. And that was actually part of the psychological process. You wake up and you said Jesus Christ what day of this

hell'. You knew the whole process, you woke up, you made your bed, they'd come and open the door a quarter of an hour later. You put your bed out the whole day. You knew you were there alone for the rest of the day. You knew you had fifteen hours steady monotony.

The screws would not speak to you except to try and degrade you. The screws who operated in this F wing were specially trained. They understood what they were doing. And what in effect they were attempting to do was to break you. It was a serious attempt to break prisoners and initially it was used on social prisoners. They used it on Micky Williams. Brought from the Isle of Wight to that. The initial thing with the unit was you went into it for a period of 90 days. You had no association whatever during those 90 days with any other prisoner. They did not talk to you. You had no communication with nobody in effect. And any time during those 90 days if you infringed one of the rules you were put back to day 1. That means you started your 90 days, afresh. Even if you were 60 days in it you were back to day 1. So you learned to keep the rules.

If you were lucky enough to make the 90 days then you went onto the second phase which was limited association. You were allowed out, maybe to sew mail bags with a couple of other prisoners and you could talk for an hour, an hour and a half. Then you went to another 90 days of that. If you didn't infringe rules you went back on your own in prison. The thing was that generally people would be broken, and they would fear going there again.

Now there was such an outcry in that period by the liberal press and the liberals within the system that they closed the Wakefield unit. But in reality they didn't close it. What they would do then was put you on Rule 43. They changed the name from a control unit to F wing. But nothing changed. Rule 43 means they could hold you for an unlimited period. They could hold you for the whole of your sentence there, if they wanted to. The outcry died down, but in fact nothing changed.

Solidarity with POWs

FRFI: What effect do publicity, agitation and pickets outside have on the prisoners?

RMCL: In terms of demonstrations, people working in solidarity with prisoners has an immense impact on prisoners. On the political level, political prisoners will see the political reasons for this. And they will also state their views on certain aspects of the sort of solidarity work, pickets, whether that work is effective or not. Now the thing that prisoners in English gaols would like best to see is the coming together of the left groups of England and as big demonstrations as possible in support of repatriation or in support of better conditions of all prisoners in prisons. Any work done on our behalf, any publicity done, is greatly appreciated.

We think the pickets could be put to a lot better use. They should be very selective, they should be used in conjunction with prisoners protests. I mean on a couple of occasions when the prisoners were actually protesting there were no pickets. And yet they would come on occasions when there was nothing happening, and just shout slogans for half an hour.

FRFI: During 1978 there was quite a big campaign built up over that year, big marches. There was also a series of rooftop protests. How did the prisoners see that particular campaign?

RMCL: They appreciated it deeply. And looking at it from the inside out it was a great boost to see that people were working effectively - all strands of the left coming together to work on a single issue. The importance of it in the early stages appeared for one reason or another. It had been like doing it would, I believe, have a number of results. It did give us a great boost in prison, in the sense that we associated deeply with it and geared our actions within the prisons to it. We decided that

we would make publicity for it. We would actively help them and communicate with the outside world and perform certain acts within the prison which would help the campaign.

FRFI: When the Albany protest took place, the Irish Solidarity Movement organised two pickets. Not at the prison, but at the Home Office Prison Department in London. Did the prisoners get to hear about that?

RMCL: Yes, they did, later, because after the 81 decision in the European Court to give free access to prisoners and letters and newspapers, they were allowed to see certain left-wing newspapers in which they did read about this. I think again it was greatly appreciated and we understood the political reasons. One drawback was that at that period there should have been people down there protesting.

The struggle continues

FRFI: Now that you're out of prison would you like to tell us something about what you're doing now?

RMCL: Well, when I came out of prison I joined Sinn Féin. I'm trying to work within my own community here, within Sinn Féin and push Sinn Féin policies within this area. At present we're trying to get a candidate elected to Europe from this area. But the main priority will be on community politics, the needs of working people. People will be broadly sympathetic to the national question, but they are deterred for one reason or another from voting for Sinn Féin or getting involved in Sinn Féin activities. So it's really a job of trying to heighten their consciousness. But the most important thing is to get involved, as I see it, in community politics right throughout the Twenty Six Counties and build up a base for a mass organisation, a mass working class party based on solid socialist Republican principles in Ireland.

FRFI: Looking back on your prison experience, would you say it strengthened your determination as a Republican?

RMCL: Without a doubt. Without a doubt. It has the effect of intensifying my beliefs and it has the effect of clarifying a lot of my ideas. It becomes more clear exactly where we stood in the Irish revolution and where we stood internationally as well, with the oppressed of the world. We're not just a nationalist army trying to get Brits out of Ireland, we see ourselves in the role of fighting in the vanguard of the oppressed right throughout the world. We are in comradeship with the Palestinians, the El Salvadoreans, with the people of Grenada, in Africa, South Africa, ANC, right throughout the world. The whole spectrum of oppressed are there fighting with us. We in Ireland are part of an international struggle. Actually I feel quite proud to be a part of that struggle. It gives me great pride to know that I am struggling with the true humanity, with the struggling people right across the globe.

At the end I send my greetings to English comrades, socialist comrades, who are working very hard to publicise the plight of Irish Republican prisoners in English gaols, and of all prisoners in English gaols. They have done some extremely important work during this last ten years in England. They publicised our plight. They have helped in every way possible by sending newspapers, by sending books and by actively working on the ground to politicise the English population and the young blacks in the ghetto areas in London and Liverpool and all throughout the British cities. Their work is very very important. In fact of major importance, because if they succeed in putting the socialist perspective on the Irish revolution forward and gaining ground on that level it will be of immense benefit to the Irish revolution. It is only up to them to keep working, and keep working very hard on this behalf. And it is appreciated by the Irish Republican prisoners. Very much appreciated. Congratulations and thank you.

Reviews

STAYING POWER The History of Black People in Britain PETER FRYER



BLACK PEOPLE IN BRITAIN

Staying Power: the History of Black People in Britain Peter Fryer, Pluto Press. £9.95 632pp
White Man's Country: Racism in British Politics Robert Miles & Annie Phizachlea, Pluto Press. £4.95 184pp.

This, the first history of Black people in Britain, is a useful addition to our knowledge. To read the continuous story from the opening sentence, 'There were Africans in Britain before the English came here' to the conclusion of the 1981 uprisings is fascinating. Peter Fryer sets out to convince the reader that Black people as individuals and communities have a history in this country, which means that they have also made the history of this land. We are persuaded, and Black people emerge from obscurity as breathing, living personalities who played their part in the struggles of the poor in Britain at all times.

Not all by any means, were impoverished and obscure. Many Black people achieved fame and fortune throughout the centuries as artists, musicians, writers and, indeed, as very high-class ladies of pleasure and leaders of fashion.

But the major characteristic of Black people in Britain is to be discovered in that most human of qualities 'staying power'. The book is a tribute to the dignity, determination and staying power of humanity against all the odds. And the odds are well documented too: the slavers, the 'science' of racism and the institutions of the British state.

Racial harassment in London. Published by the GLC, County Hall, London SE1 7PB 1984. Free.

'Racial harassment in London' is a report submitted by a panel of inquiry set up by the GLC Police Committee. It attempts to assess the incidence and nature of racial harassment and in particular the response of the police and GLC housing departments to the attacks reported to them.

Predictably the panel found that racial attacks are increasing in number, yet the majority of these are not reported either to the police or housing departments. Victims consistently experience long delays in '999' calls being answered, and a racist approach by the police if they do arrive — the attackers are frequently ignored while the victims themselves may be interrogated, searched, detained and on occasion arrested on 'trumped-up' charges.

Peter Fryer shows us how the bid for freedom was the first priority for all Black slaves landed on these shores, how even the pampered and petted 'properties' of aristocratic ladies would run for liberty as soon as possible. Following the abolition of slavery the human dignity of Black people in Britain was under vicious assault from nineteenth century civilisers who were liberal gentlemen in the context of the English parliamentary system, but filthy-minded racists in relationship to Black people.

The honourable members of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the Anthropological Society of London and others, developed a mass of pseudo-scientific data leading to the conclusion that there is 'good reason for classifying the Negro as a distinct species' closer to the ape than to the European. These convenient theories meant that the genocide practised in British colonial possessions was not a matter to trouble the consciences of the profit-makers and their friends.

In 1885 there were protests in Britain, led by John Stuart Mill, against the Governor of Jamaica. Governor Eyre had suppressed a rebellion of Black farmers at Morant Bay with the utmost sadistic cruelty unleashed against children, women and men. Immediately an organisation sprang up against the 'Nigger Philanthropists' in Britain in defence of the Governor who was threatened with prosecution. Its members sought to raise £10,000 for his legal defence and their names read like a roll-call of the great Victorians; Thomas Carlyle, Charles Dickens, poet laureate Kingsley among them.

RACIST LONDON



Housing departments encourage racism by ignoring reported harassment, taking no action against the perpetrators, allocating large numbers of Afro-Caribbean and Asian families to the oldest and most run-down estates, neglecting repair and maintenance of these estates, and refusing transfer or support where families are

Against such respectable men and 'scientific' organisations the Black people of Britain had to continue to live and survive. They did so because the struggle against oppression is the fight for all humanity and Black people took pride of place in the early organisation of the first working-class movements in the world. In the words of one noble Earl, 'The idea of abolishing slavery is connected with the leveling system and the rights of man' with 'liberty and equality'.

Black people took an active part in the first trades union movements, the suffrage organisations and the Chartist movement, nearly always representing the most progressive political trends. William Cuffay, son of a slave, was for example one of the best-loved and known leaders of the Chartist movement in London. He taught a whole generation of his fellow workers what organisation and solidarity means. Sentenced to transportation for the term of his natural life for political activities Cuffay continued his work to the last, addressing his working-class audience in Tasmania as 'fellow slaves'.

After the glories of the Chartist movement when British workers had extended the hand of liberty, equality and fraternity to the oppressed Irish and other colonialised peoples as part of their own struggle against ruling-class tyranny, the movement changed. Black people could not continue to play a leading role in the struggles of the British working class because the organisations of the working class became to a greater or lesser extent racist.

The story of Black people in this land becomes a history of the every-day struggle to survive in the heartland of the great British Empire. A country which could oppress with a poisonous mixture of military might, missionary arrogance, divide-and-rule and genocide, one sixth of the planet's surface, was an uncomfortable place for Black people to live in. Humanity and common-sense often won through in the communities but Black people continued to be seen as representatives of the colonialised nations and the working-class organisations usually took the same view of the British right to Empire as their masters.

The determination of the working-class to permit no advance on their hard-won rights and standard of living by any other section was clearly seen after both World Wars. Race riots, actually attacks on the Black community, broke out in Liverpool and Cardiff in 1919. Black servicemen were dumped by the hundreds, penniless and defenceless on the beaches of Britain. After the Second World War anti-Black riots again broke out in Liverpool and elsewhere. The immediate background to these attacks was the determined efforts of the National Union of Seamen to keep Black seamen off British ships.

In periods such as these the Black community could do little more than defend itself. Among the many welfare organisations that sprang up was the League of Coloured Peoples established by the Jamaican Dr Harold Moody. But that little more they did also, Black newspapers and periodicals appeared, demands for equal rights never ceased and 'staying power' saw them through. The high aspirations for freedom now took the form of the anti-colonial struggle and many Black people agitated and organised from Britain against Britain's Empire.

in actual physical danger from their attackers.

The report concludes by recommending better training and education of police officers in dealing with complaints of racial harassment, more efficient registration of incidents, improved consultation between ethnic community tenants by GLC housing departments. In common with all such 'well meaning' bourgeois attempts to cosmetically patch up an intolerable situation the report not only fails in scope (harassment in schools and work situations is barely mentioned) but most importantly misses the political reality. Despite the panel's own evidence that police racism is itself the instigator of many incidents, the report does not recognise that racial harassment will continue to increase so long as capitalism survives in this country, using its racist police and state officials to implement interracial hatred, the strongest and most divisive weapon of oppression.

Elizabeth Steel

The Pan African Congress held in Manchester in 1945 was fired not only by the giants of the Black intelligentsia as earlier Congresses has been, but by the millions of oppressed people in struggle against the British. Present were trades union representatives from Sierra Leone and Trinidad, freedom fighters from Nigeria and the Cameroons as well as political parties like the Grenada Labour Party and the People's National Party of Jamaica. The 'declaration to the Colonial Workers, Farmers and Intellectuals' drafted by Kwame Nkrumah from that Congress 'served as the pace-maker of decolonisation in Africa and the British West Indies'. Meanwhile Asian radicals continued to lobby through organisations like Annie Besant's India League for support for independence.

If anywhere there is to be a criticism of Peter Fryer's book it is that he too easily differentiates between the anti-racist fight in Britain and the anti-colonial struggle being orchestrated, together with the oppressed masses, from Britain. He says that the radicals, CLR James, George Padmore, Ras Makonnen and Jomo Kenyatta were not left wing as opposed to Dr Harold Moody and the League of Coloured Peoples. The radicals had set themselves the task of independence for the colonies and they achieved this in Africa and India. This might be a true impression of how events appeared at the time but it does not help the reader to prepare for the final section of the book which records the rise of the official racist state in Britain.

Many Black activists did of course see the link between the imperialist oppression of other nations and the position of Black people in the working class in Britain. One such is Shapurji Saklatvala, an untiring anti-imperialist and Communist Member of Parliament for North Battersea (1922), whose life is briefly touched on.



The history of Black people in Britain in the post war period is the history of double oppression, both as workers and as black people — in some cases the triple oppression of black women workers. It is also a history of the racism and betrayals of succeeding Labour Governments and the trade union movement. For just as

independence has not brought liberty to former British colonies in the capitalist system, so being British and Black does not mean democratic rights. The final stages of the story are well-documented and the author draws largely on the writings of A. Sivanandan to relate the recent struggles of Black people for trades union rights, against police attack and racist harassment. But Peter Fryer throws away some of his responsibilities as a historian and merely gives chapter and verse to show that Black people in Britain are 'second class citizens'. Whereas the racism of the past is well explained within the economics of the slave trade and plantation production, the racism of the present day remains something of a mystery though real enough.

Apart from this flaw at the end of the book, and that is only one-sided, it is to be recommended as a good read.

When we turn to *White Man's Country: Racism in British Politics* we know for sure that pseudo-science is alive and with us still. I feel truly sorry for anyone buying this book. It contains a mish-mash of sociology, epistemology, yes — and even anthropology can be found here. In attempting to explain racism in Britain since 1945 the authors have produced a series of essays which read as they are addressed to a seminar for white five year olds with advanced university fatigue. Here is a sample.

'The association of physical difference with negative attributes in a deterministic manner in the minds of sections of all classes in Britain meant that the reaction to the migrants was racist.' 'The crudest and most widely known classification is that between Caucasian, Negro and Mongoloid "races"'. 'Race' it seems is obvious. Unfortunately it is one of the human species' most dangerous myths. This is demonstrated in two ways.

It may be fun to revive the discussions of nineteenth century racists and then discard them, but it is replaced by a 'marxism' abused beyond belief.

'In the case of the Far East, the image of the "Oriental coolie" will take on new significance, but one that is still linked with the idea of "race"'. 'What the idea of "race" obscures is the real historical development of capital...'

Of course we have to be amused or we feel anger with the authors whose real political aim is stated at the end of this ridiculous book. The unemployed youth who rose up in the summer of 1981 are regarded as 'sub-proletariat' and the only way forward for them is to unite with the organised Labour Movement. In its turn 'The Labour Party and the trades unions must mobilise their rank and file against racist practices at all levels'. What a lot of garbage to get through to arrive at the old forces of the past, the failed, the stale system of British chauvinism. Susan Davidson

HEALTH IN SOUTH AFRICA

Crippling a nation: Health in apartheid South Africa. Aziza Seedat, IDAF £3.00.

In the country which performed the first heart transplant operation, the country which has the highest Gross National Product in Africa, Aziza Seedat's book shows that 'health' under apartheid means suffering and death for the black majority of South Africa.

Infant mortality for whites in 1978 was 14.9 per 1,000 live births, for black Africans in 1974 100-110 per 1,000 live births (since 1947 it has not been compulsory for Africans to register births or deaths). White South Africans suffer the diseases of affluence. In 1982 the incidence of heart disease amongst whites was the highest in the world. Black South Africans suffer the diseases of poverty and repression. Black children in the Ciskei die at the rate of 3-4 per hour from Kwashiorkor and Marasmus (malnutrition). Diseases such as TB, Typhoid, Measles and Polio are endemic in some areas. Most of these could be eradicated by improved living and health service standards. But the yearly income of the average black South African in 1977 was R237 compared with R2,534 for

whites, and in 1981 the doctor/patient ratio was 1:330 whites, 1:91,000 Africans. The South African government and its western backers are always telling us that the black people in South Africa are better off than their African neighbours, but in Angola there is 1 doctor per 16,400 pop. and in Upper Volta 1 doctor per 59,600 pop.

Industrial diseases such as asbestosis and lead poisoning are caused by totally inadequate standards of occupational safety in industry, and the author states that this may be the attraction for foreign investors faced with increasingly stringent safety regulations in their own country. In 1984 a British mining expert claimed that deaths in South African mines were 5 times those in British mines. Mental health institutions have been described as 'human warehouses' with patients forced to work 11 hours per day for pittance pay in the form of cigarettes and sweets; sleeping on grass mats on a cement floor, housed in old mining compounds.

Aziza Seedat's book gives many examples of the lack of even basic medical care and shows that it is the apartheid system of exploitation that causes this. The author demonstrates clearly that only the destruction of apartheid can bring health and dignity to all the people.

Liz Cherry
CRIPPLING A NATION is published by IDAF, Canon Collins House, 64 Essex Road, London N1 6LR £3.00

THE ATOM BOMB

WEAPON OF IMPERIALIST BLACKMAIL

At 8.45am on 6 August 1945 a single US plane dropped one atom bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. 80,000 people died and an equal number were badly injured within a few minutes. A city of 300,000 people had been destroyed! Three days later, the only other atom bomb then in existence was dropped on Nagasaki, at an equally horrific cost in life. Why was this devastating new weapon unleashed against Japan?

The reason given by the then US President, Harry Truman, was that it was necessary to use the bomb '...to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans'. The US military staff claimed that an invasion of the main islands of Japan would involve an enormous loss of American lives, and that therefore there was no alternative. *This is simply not true, and they knew at the time that it was not true.* The Japanese military forces were in no position to mount an offensive against American forces, or even to defend themselves. The Japanese navy had been virtually destroyed, and the US Air Force (USAF) had almost total control of the air. The USAF was able to attack Japanese cities at will, without meeting any resistance. It had already destroyed 41% of the built up area of 66 major Japanese cities. Even an official US publication stated

'It is the Survey's opinion that certainly prior to December 31 1945, Japan would have surrendered, even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated.' (*US Strategic Bombing Survey, Summary Report on the Pacific War Washington 1946 p17*)

This was known to be true at the time as the US had broken Japanese military codes much earlier in the war.

The bomb was used, not because there were no military alternatives, but as part of US imperialism's political strategy, to force the surrender of Japan before the invasion of northern China and Manchuria by the Red Army, due to begin on 8 August; and to use the atom bomb as a means of blackmail against the Soviet Union, whose conventional military forces were in a commanding position in large areas of Eastern Eur-



Hiroshima after the explosion of the A-Bomb

ope. American policy makers know that the Red Army could conquer the Japanese armies on the China mainland within two months, so they aimed to defeat Japan before the Soviet armed forces could reach Port Arthur, and thus provide the USSR with much-needed naval bases and an outlet for communications via Manchuria. This was all in accordance with the plan outlined by Secretary of State Stimson on 2 July. 'If Russia is a part of the threat [to Japan], the Russian attack, if actual, must not have progressed too far'. Or, as his successor, James Byrnes put it: 'I feared what would happen when the Red Army entered Manchuria'.

The threat of the bomb was of equal value to imperialism in Europe. As soon as the American and British imperialists were sure that the bomb would work technically, they began a diplomatic and political offensive against the Soviet Union, while they were still supposed to be Allies in the war against fascism. News of the first successful atomic test, which took place at Alamogordo, New Mexico on 16 July 1945, reached President Truman on the opening day of the Potsdam Peace conference which was to discuss the situation in Europe after the defeat of fascism. Concealing from Soviet representatives information

about the new weapon, they immediately refused recognition of anti-fascist governments in Bulgaria and Rumania which had Soviet support. Privately, they were jubilant, especially their British partners.

The Chief of Imperial General Staff, Alanbrooke, wrote in his diary: 'We now had something in our hands which could redress the balance with the Russians... now we could say, "If you insist on doing this or that, well..." And then where are the Russians?' He later commented that Churchill 'was already seeing himself capable of eliminating all the Russian centres of industry and population... He had at once painted a wonderful picture of himself as the sole possessor of these bombs and capable of dumping them where he wished, thus all-powerful and capable of dictating to Stalin! When the bomb was actually dropped, Truman's first remark to those with him at the time sums up the utterly blood-thirsty nature of imperialism. 'This is the greatest thing in history!' The most advanced technology known to man is used for mass murder and large-scale destruction and the imperialists are delighted!

Patrick Newman

inbrief

● Nigerian Kidnap

Mighty Howe flexed himself to declare 'pussyfooting' with Nigerians, Thatcher spoke: we are ready to expel whatever cost to Britain's relations' and Lab's gallants tumbled over each other in pathetic homage to the pompous rules and fanciful traditions claimed by British monarchy.

As the pack sobered up and the Nigerian government threatened reprisals that 'cost' was seen to be no trivial calculation: over £2 billion in direct investments, a further £2 billion in unpaid debt and credits, plus trade worth around billion a year. This time profits demanded a subtler touch than was given the Libyans.

Being the former Transport Minister and brother-in-law to the deposed President Shagari, Umaru Dikko was a key author to an epic in the bourgeoisie's annals of kleptomania. Nigerians reckon that the return of just ten absconders, of whom Dikko is one, would be enough to pay off the nation's \$15 billion foreign debt. Under Shagari revenues were purloined by Nigerian, British and US capitalists to the tune of an estimated £14 million a day. Any trial of the bribed would have to bring out who the bribers were. An uncomfortable prospect for British companies.

However the use of the newly extended powers of the Prevention of Terrorism Act against Africans is a forerunner of what is to come for all those in Britain who oppose British imperialism. Also notable is the hue-and-cry over the Vienna Convention on diplomatic status. The state is viewing this Convention. It intends to remove all barriers to its subjection of foreign nationals in Britain, and as the South African Embassy Picket Campaign has shown, remove the rights of those people who protest against the activities of British imperialism's allies. As ever for British imperialist diplomacy the Convention is to be simply one of convenience. Trevor Rayne

Gandhi's play backfires

The thirty seven years of Indian 'independence' from two centuries of British Imperialist rule and exploitation have borne precious little fruit for the mass of the Indian people.

Significantly, it was in India that the British perfected their strategy of divide and rule - a tactic successfully used in almost every British colony. Divisions between religious and racial groups were manipulated, exacerbated and in many cases artificially created in order to forestall the independence struggle. Thus in the Punjab, the British deliberately fostered the racist notion of the Sikhs being a 'martial race', and made the region a major recruiting ground for the British army.

India since 'independence' has been ruled almost entirely by the Congress Party led by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Gandhi is also no stranger to employing the British tactic of fostering communal tensions. Most recently this has culminated in the bloody assault on the holiest shrine of the Sikh religion, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, on 4 and 5 June. While the Punjab state was sealed off from the rest of India and lay under martial law, 15,000 soldiers of the Indian Army massacred almost 2,000 people and destroyed much of the temple complex. The leader of the Sikh agitation in the Punjab, Sant Jarnai Singh Bhindranwale died in the assault along with his closest aides.

The situation in the Punjab has arisen due to the deliberate actions of the Gandhi government, in particular during the period of 1977-1980 when Gandhi attempted to bring down the state administration of the Akali Dal (the party representing the interests of the wealthy Sikh landowning classes). Gandhi financed and sponsored the fundamentalist Sikh leader, Bhin-

dranwale, in order to foment splits in the Akali Dal.

The Punjab is India's richest state and produces 65% of the nation's grain reserves. As the agricultural boom resulting from the 1960's Green Revolution petered out and as India has become gripped in the imperialist economic crisis, the Akali Dal has agitated for greater economic concessions from the central government. Gandhi's tactics meant that Bhindranwale's chauvinist followers gained the upper hand in the Akali Dal, with their call for a separate Sikh state or Khalistan (land of the pure).

The Akali Dal's leadership's utterly reactionary character was revealed most sharply by their threat to block grain movements to the rest of India, and their attacks on the rights of both Hindus and the poor migrant workers in the Punjab. Indeed, in 18 months Bhindranwale's followers killed some 600 fellow Punjabis (both Hindu and Sikh), including many Punjabi progressives who had denounced Bhindranwale as a Congress tool, and resisted attempts to split the masses along communal lines.

It has also become clear that attempts have been made by US imperialism to destabilise India, by supplying the Sikh agitators with arms and money, through their puppet dictator Zia in Pakistan. By her savage display of military force and removal of democratic rights in the Punjab, Gandhi has gained valuable preparation for dealing with the inevitable upsurge of class struggles throughout India.

Bill Hughes

TERROR IN SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka: the national question and the Tamil liberation struggle. Satchi Ponnambalam, Zed Press 295pp £6.95

This book was printed soon after the genocidal attacks on the Tamil people in 1983. Written from a materialist standpoint it chronicles 2000 years of Sri Lankan history. The author destroys the myths used against the Tamils by the Sinhala Buddhist ruling class to maintain their racist rule. He argues that Sri Lanka has two distinct nations - the Sinhala and the Tamils, and that 25 years of struggle, since the British granted formal independence in 1948, has taught the Tamils that they have no option but to demand a separate state, 'Tamil Eelam', in the north and eastern parts of the island.

By 1840 British colonialism sought a bulwark to its administration, Tamils were imported from southern India. The Tamil and Sinhala peoples jointly struggled for independence. However, the Sinhala ruling class treacherously ignored all agreements made with the Tamils for equal rights, and, sensing that a divided working class and peasantry was the only way to hold onto power, fostered racist attacks upon Tamil communities. Within months of current President Jayawardene's election in 1977 10,000 Tamils had been forced to flee Sinhalese areas. Openly declaring a policy of allowing imperialism to do its utmost in Sri Lanka Jayawardene stated 'let the robber barons come'.

Today a million Tamils barely sustain themselves on the plantations, where women are the bulk of the workforce. Half are reckoned to be chronically malnourished, their wages are 60% of men's, and their infant mortality rate is triple that of Sinhalese women. Jayawardene has led an attack on trade union and democratic rights, political opponents have been hunted down for state bounties, two rival political parties have been outlawed, the police given powers to cremate or bury their victims without the need for inquiries or post-

mortems (Civil rights lawyers termed this 'a licence to kill'.) The Prevention of Terrorism Act allows people to be held uncommunicado for 18 months at a time, diabolical tortures provide confessions which are admissible evidence in court, and elections have been postponed until 1989 giving Jayawardene 12 years of barbarous rule. This is the reality of a state which the British Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs called 'a democracy which is to be much admired'. As Jayawardene said the 'British are our old friends. We trust them'.

British imperialism trained the police and army which led last year's assault on the Tamil communities, killing 2000 people and forcing tens of thousands to run for their lives.

Now Israeli agents and mercenary bands have been hired to keep up the bloody oppression. This book details not only this racism but the growing consciousness of the Tamil people and their vanguard role in the struggle of all Sri Lanka's oppressed. It provides a clear background and analysis of imperialism's role in the suffering of the Tamil people, and should be read by all who share the great debt of solidarity that is owed the Sri Lankan masses. Viraj Mendis

● The hour of the vampires

Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, brilliant military strategist of the 25 April 1974 democratic revolution that put an end to 50 years of fascist dictatorship in Portugal, is one of 42 revolutionaries detained in police raids on 19/20 June. The 42 have been held incommunicado for 20 days, they have only one half hour meeting with their lawyer and a police presence up to the preliminary trial. The police crackdown on alleged supporters of the Popular Forces of 25 April (FP-25) has been accompanied by organised press hysteria against the 'terrorists' of the left. Soares' interment of political opponents will be even worse with the new Internal Security Law which aims to take away rights from detainees and to set up a political security organisation empowered to tap telephones, open mail, search homes without warrant, collect information on all political activists. This same treacherous social democrat Soares was the first European leader to banquet PW Botha on his recent tour. Support for fascism abroad and fascist measures at home confirm Otelo's assessment that in Portugal, 'it is the hour of the vampires'. Andy Goddard

● Hunger strikes in Turkey

At least ten Turkish political prisoners are believed to have died in the latest hunger strike protest against fascist repression. This courageous act of resistance to the military junta began on 11 April when revolutionary prisoners in Metris and Samsun jails in Istanbul, and Elazig jail in eastern Turkey demanded political status and an end to torture and executions. Earlier this year revolutionaries in Diyarbakir and Mamak military prisons mounted hunger strikes, in which 12 prisoners lost their lives. (see FRF 40).

Dozens more prisoners at the present time are in a critical condition. Press coverage of these protests in the British media has been either minimal or nonexistent which contrasts sharply with the almost daily reports on the health of Sakharov. Bill Hughes

Prisoners Fightback



Peterhead show trial

At Peterhead High Court on Friday 22 June sentences totalling 45 years were handed down on 12 out of 14 prisoners singled out on charges of 'mobbing and riot' for their part in the protest in Peterhead prison in January this year.

PRISONER MURDERED BY NEGLECT

42 year old Wilma Lucas is one of the latest casualties of police neglect. Said to be 'ratt' and an alcoholic, she was arrested on 10 February for breach of probation for an offence connected to her alcoholism illness. She appeared in court at 4 pm and spent the night in Addlestone police station, Surrey, before being transferred to Holloway prison on remand for psychiatric reports.

The Coroner's Court heard that in Addlestone, the police broke all the rules for dealing with potentially ill or drunken prisoners. She was thrown lying face down unattended in the back of a police coach for the long journey to Holloway on 11 February. At Holloway an auxiliary nurse found widespread bruising. The medical officer sent Wilma Lucas to Whitt ngton Hospital but the duty doctor saw no reason to admit her, despite confirming the presence of bruising 'in keeping with being a chronic alcoholic'. In fact she was suffering from a haemorrhage pressing on her brain. She was sent back to Holloway. The next day she was admitted to the Royal Free Hospital where she died. Besides the subdural haemorrhage, the pathologist found nearly 100 bruises on her body at post-mortem.

Delivering their verdict the jury severely criticised the police for their treatment of Wilma Lucas. As is usual, no one will pay for this callous killing by neglect. Life is cheap to British police, but this case shows the total contempt they hold people in.

Tony Sheridan

FRFI FOR PRISONERS

British prisons hold over 42,000 prisoners in squalid conditions amongst the worst in the world.

• 696 prisoners died in prison from 1969 - 1980 42% from 'unnatural causes' in 1980 • The list of black people dying in prison in suspicious circumstances is growing fast • 5 Irish political prisoners have been murdered by the prison authorities since 1974.

In the face of this repression prisoners have fought back and won significant victories. FRFI has consistently publicised and supported prisoners' struggles for their rights.

Help us to build on this work by giving a donation to our prison fund. Anything however small, is welcome. £4 pays for a year's cost of sending FRFI to a prisoner. 80 prisoners already receive FRFI free. A regular donation will help us to put this vital work on a firm basis. £10, £5 or whatever you can afford will contribute to the books, pamphlets and other necessities we send to prisoners.

We often receive donations from prisoners for political campaigns. Return this solidarity - support our Prisoners' Fightback Fund. Donations, cheques/POs (payable to Larkin Publications) should be sent to: FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

or concerned groups from attending. The state has quite deliberately placed its worst hell-holes - Peterhead and the Inverness cages - furthest from public view.

Despite these conditions the prisoners exposed the state's hypocritical indignation about danger to life and property and revealed how their lives and few possessions are under constant danger from the prison system itself. Fraser McDowall said 'Any incident and they come in and beat up people indiscriminately. Whoever is in front gets it, they just don't care.'

Repression

The January protest was in response to the repression in Peterhead - nightly cell searches after lock up; degrading internal body searches before and after visits and frequent interventions by the MUFTI squad. John Will was severely beaten up by two prison officers 24 hours before the protest. John Will was hospitalised for six weeks with crushed ribs.

As usual the state is trying to pretend that the protest was the work of a few 'disruptive' prisoners led by three 'ring-leaders' - Alan Brown, Frank Halliday and John Gallagher. Despite this attempt to angle out these three comrades the revelations about terrible conditions and brutality have been embarrassing for the Scottish Office which was glad to see this 'two month' trial reduced to six weeks. The Glasgow Herald described Peterhead as 'dangerously diseased'. Lord Ross felt obliged to say that 'resentment about prison conditions' did not justify 'law-breaking'.

Dear FRFI

I am writing to ask for your help to call a picket on behalf of my brother, Peter Wardlaw and four of his fellow inmates, three of which are in Peterhead and the other one has now been transferred to the cages. As you may know the dirty protest in Peterhead prison which Peter is part of is now in its sixth month and the repressive measures used by the state are intensifying. The protest is reaching a serious level in which the prisoners are being denied all human rights.

A Wardlaw

Note: This letter was sent to Edinburgh FRFI who are planning protest action. Any reader wishing to support this action should contact Edinburgh FRFI, c/o 1st May Bookshop, Box 40, Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh

John Gallagher, described as the 'ring-leader' responsible for thousands of slates thrown at prison officers, was shown in press photographs hanging from the roof under pressure of two hoses directed at him from close range. Gary McMenamin said 'it was an out and out case of attempted murder'.

BLACK PRISONER OUT OF 'F' WING

Shujaa Moshesh, a black prisoner serving 18 years for his part in the Spaghetti House siege of 1975 was kept in 'F' wing isolation unit at Wakefield prison for nine and a half months from October 1983 to July 1984. Inquiries were begun on Shujaa's behalf by FRFI to the Home Office, a letter was sent to him saying we were taking action and also a card from the South African Embassy picket on 6 June with over 200 signatures including David Kitson's. As plans were getting under way for a picket of the prison department, Wakefield prison and questions to be raised in parliament, we learned that on 10 July, Shujaa suddenly been moved from 'F' wing to normal location at Hull prison.

This move can only be put down to Home Office concern about the publicity that our actions would have occasioned. In 1975 the Home Office was forced to suspend the use of the control units at Wakefield and Wormwood Scrubs prisons because of public protests at the inhumane conditions they inflicted on prisoners. However, under the changed name of 'F' wing, the unit at Wakefield has been used continuously since then as a barbaric means of brutalising prisoners both mentally and physically and coupled with the use

of Rule 43, 'good order and discipline', has meant that prisoners have been and are being held in solitary confinement for months on end. Steve Blake, Irish POW, has been in 'F' wing since 24 May 1983 - 14 months.

The regime in an isolation unit is geared to break a prisoner's will and constitutes psychological and physical torture (See Raymond Mac Lochlainn's interview on centre pages). As Shujaa describes the 'windows are designed in such a way that the prisoner can barely see the sky and never sees the sun'.

It is clear that Shujaa was being further victimised whilst in 'F' wing because of the three day hunger strike he staged to protest at the proposed certifying of black prisoner Cyrus Noor in Wandsworth prison. The British State fears the solidarity between prisoners and their fight back and will go to bat on lengths to try and crush them. 'F' wing and other isolation units are examples of this barbarity. Organised action has forced Shujaa's removal from 'F' wing but 'F' wing itself remains. FRFI will organise in defence of any prisoner incarcerated in this brutal unit and demands its closure.

Alexa Byrne

PRISONERS RESIST BRITAIN

Four prisoners are fighting the Home Office in the courts over Leon Brittan's vicious parole announcements in October (see FRFI 34). The four - Peter Hoggan, Roy Honeyman, Edward Findlay and Roy Matthews - are serving sentences for categories of offences covered by Brittan's new restrictions. The changes included: minimum 20 year sentences for certain categories of murder; automatic life sentences for carrying firearms in pursuance of crime, and abolition of the right of parole for fixed sentences of five years or more in certain categories including the sweeping heading 'crimes of violence'.

Two judges heard the case in the High Court in May. One, Mr Justice Forbes, found against Brittan on five counts. Three new judges next heard the case in the Appeal Court on 18 June. The result, on 6 July, was again split when one judge, Lord Justice Griffiths, ruled in favour of the prisoners on two different grounds from Forbes. These split decisions, with two out of the judges ruling in favour of the prisoners, are an important victory for the prisoners and an embarrassment for Brittan. The case will now go to the House of Lords.

The findings against Brittan include the following: he introduced new categories of offenders and parole without parliamentary approval; failed to consult the Parole Board and changed the nature of Parole Board reviews placing them in contravention of the Parole Act, intended only to use the Parole Board for all cases if they agreed to implement his policy; contravened article 11(2) of the Declaration of Human Rights by applying the changes retrospectively.

Brittan's announcement on parole goes alongside increased provision for 10/74 (solitary) calls for top security prisoners, intensifying internal regimes and renewed use of control regimes. The legal battle being fought by these four prisoners is typical of the courage and skill with which prisoners are fighting back against increased repression in the prisons. They will not be defeated! Victory to the prisoners!

Tony Sheridan

Gary was badly beaten up before his appearance and John Gallagher had to demand in court that he receive medical attention.

Prison officers' evidence was the usual mixture of lies and contradictions: one claimed to have watched TV screens for nine hours without eyestrain (two hours is the normal limit); another, Pudsey, had to admit he had given names that were not in the prison log book. PO Clark, the TV watcher, admitted that one of his entries was 'misleading'. Lord Ross ordered deletions to be made in the records before they were shown to the jury.

The jury rejected 'wilful fire-raising' charges against all prisoners except Alan Brown who had pleaded guilty. The Peterhead punishment block remains filled with prisoners in solitary, a new punishment block has been opened up; six prisoners remain on 'dirty' protest in the old block. Peter Wardlaw - one of 25 prisoners classified as 'subversive' - is one of the six and has been in solitary since last December. The Peterhead prisoners are still fighting back and FRFI sends its full support. Messages of solidarity should be sent to John Gallagher in Perth, Alec Howat in Saughton and the other comrades in Peterhead.

Victory to the Scottish prisoners!

Paul McKinley

VICTORY IN EUROPE

The European Court of Human Rights has found the British government guilty of three separate breaches of human rights for its treatment of former Irish POWs Fr Fell and Sean Campbell following the Albany protest 1976.

The ECHR ruled that

1. Britain had violated articles 6, 8 and 13 by restricting Fr Fell's personal correspondence and access to his solicitor;
2. Britain breached articles 6 and 8 by denying both men legal advice on personal injury claims following the assaults by prison officers;
3. The Home Office violated article 6 by failing to publicise the verdict of the prison Board of Visitors against Sean Campbell and by failing to allow him legal representation at the BOV hearing.

This judgement marks a further advance in prisoners' rights following the High Court victory last November when prisoners won a discretionary right to legal representation in internal hearings. Alastair Logan, who acted for Fr Fell and Sean Campbell, said: 'The

judgement is the product of unswerving determination on the part of Irish political prisoners to obtain justice within the British prison system for all inmates.'

It has taken eight years unremitting struggle to obtain this victory. It is yet further testimony to the principled stand taken by Irish POWs in defence of all prisoners' rights. No doubt the Home Office will seek to circumvent this, their latest defeat, by increased use of 10/74 transfers and solitary confinement under Rule 43. Steve Blake is now in his fourteenth month of solitary in Wakefield F wing under Rule 43.

Fr Fell and Sean Campbell must be congratulated for securing this legal victory for all prisoners.

Tony Sheridan

Sean Mac Stiofain on EEC Elections

The article below represents the personal views of the author and not necessarily those of FRFI

The EEC election results can only be described as disappointing for Sinn Féin, and, no amount of talk about percentages of votes can hide the fact that Sinn Féin's vote was down by 12,000 since the Westminster election in 1983, yet the SDLP did not gain those votes and spokespersons for the Alliance Party and the SDLP agreed that Catholic Alliance supporters (about 15,000 Catholic Unionists) voted for Hume and against Sinn Féin.

The Sinn Féin vote was down not only in the Six Counties but all over Ireland because tens of thousands of Republicans could not vote for candidates who were going to take their seats if elected to the EEC parliament. This radical departure from Republican policy was and still is seen by those Republicans as the thin end of the wedge towards ending the abstentionist policy, a policy that has kept the Republican movement free from the never ending compromise of the status quo in both British established states in Ireland.

The massive 230,000 votes achieved by arch-bigot Ian Paisley represents a personal vote for himself but not a massive vote for his party. Nevertheless it demonstrates that there are almost 1/4m people in the North of Ireland who wish to identify themselves with the 'burn all Catholics' policy recently enunciated by a close associate of Paisley's. No doubt this alone will be seen as an insurmountable problem by those who preach constitutional politics. However genuine revolutionaries will regard this vote first of all as a challenge to redouble their efforts towards an independent Irish republic and secondly it serves as a timely reminder that armed struggle is the only way that a subject people can achieve their liberation.

The increase in the Fine Gael and Fianna Fail representation at Strasbourg reflects the growing unease of the bourgeoisie in the 26 Counties, and obviously the writing is on the wall for the smaller parties who will be devoured by both of these Irish neo-colonial agents of British imperialism.

If the EEC election results were disappointing for Sinn Féin they were disastrous for the renegade Irish Labour Party who lost the four seats won in 1979, and unless the leadership find the moral courage to pull out of the coalition this party will collapse and few Irish workers will shed tears for them.

The Workers Party also suffered a major defeat in this election, their candidates' vote in the Six Counties was derisory while in the Twenty Six Counties their overall vote of 48,449 was much lower than the Sinn Féin vote of 93,656. In Dublin the Workers Party candidate

Des Geraghty could only poll 19,590 votes although he is very well known to Dublin voters due to his frequent interviews on RTE and his position as a full time official of the ITGWU.

He would have won a seat if Dublin workers trusted his party. But they did not and workers, particularly the unemployed stayed away from the polls, more than half of the electorate abstained from an election to a Rich persons' parliament over a system that has deprived 400,000 Irish people of the right to work.

Sinn Féin should have won support from many of those workers who are obviously disillusioned with the political system and with the parties that accept it. There are lessons for Sinn Féin from these results. First, that compromise on political principles does not win support but loses it! Two, vast potential support for the Revolutionary Movement can be won from the unemployed and low paid workers who reject the so-called Labour Party and who do not accept the anti-national policies of the Workers Party.

Two things have to be done before next year's local elections. First, the leadership of the Republican Movement must make a public statement that there is no intention of abandoning the revolutionary abstentionist policy. Such a statement would enable Republicans all over Ireland to support Sinn Féin in the local elections so that Sinn Féin would outpoll the SDLP with many seats on local councils, win control of some councils and the balance of power in others, and use their local power to aid both the anti-imperialist struggle and the vast ever-increasing number of unemployed. Also the Republican leadership should ensure that unemployed Republicans give correct leadership to their comrades on the dole queues and help them build a mighty nationwide movement for the unemployed. Both these things can be done without deviating from Republican principles and achieving them will aid the armed struggle, the main way that imperialism in Ireland will be destroyed.

Sean Mac Stiofain

POWs on trial

The trial of four Irish POWs, accused of assaulting Kenneth Littlejohn, ended in Leicester Crown Court on Thursday 28 June. Sean Kinsella, Sean Hayes and Liam Baker were found guilty and sentenced to four years. The jury failed to agree a verdict on Pat Guilfoyle who had denied taking part in the attack.

Kenneth Littlejohn, the notorious agent provocateur, was beaten up in the exercise yard in Gartree prison on 25 January 1983. Sean Kinsella, Sean Hayes and Liam Baker attacked him with table legs for about 20 seconds. The attack was carried out in full view of prison officers and other prisoners.

Sean Kinsella explained in court why the action was taken. Littlejohn came to Gartree in December 1982. Very soon after arrival he began attempting to organise an attack on the POWs. Seven

prisoners, including black prisoner Shujaa Moshesh and one of the framed Birmingham 6, Patrick Hill, gave evidence about Littlejohn's machinations against the POWs. He had tried to get shears off one prisoner and a knife off another. He asked Shujaa Moshesh if black prisoners would take part in a planned attack on the POWs. Shujaa and others immediately informed the POWs. The POWs decided to act. Sean pointed out that it was a 'controlled and disciplined' attack and that if they had

intended to seriously injure Littlejohn they could have done so.

Patrick Guilfoyle, who is due for release in October 1985, denied taking part in the attack. He informed the court that Sean Kinsella had ordered him to stay out of it. Sean confirmed this. When Justice Skinner asked 'Were you a senior officer in the IRA?' Sean said quietly 'Yes'.

Kenneth Littlejohn tried to present himself as an 'idealist' with no grudge against the POWs. This 'idealist' was arrested with his brother in Dublin in 1972 following an armed bank robbery carried out on behalf of British intelligence in order to discredit the IRA and bring about emergency legislation in the Free State. At his trial in Dublin Littlejohn told how he had been recruited by British intelligence to infiltrate and discredit the IRA and also to assassinate Republican leaders. Littlejohn's targets included Sean Mac Stiofain and Seamus Costello. Seamus Costello was, in fact, later assassinated in Dublin in October 1977.

Littlejohn and his brother got 20 years. They escaped from Mountjoy prison in March 1974 - Keith Littlejohn was recaptured immediately. Kenneth Littlejohn was in Birmingham, staying at the home of NF supporter and police tout Thomas Watt, when the Birmingham bombs went off on 21 November 1974. Curiously Watt was a main prosecution witness against the framed Birmingham 6. Littlejohn was eventually recaptured and sent back to Mountjoy. In 1981, however, the Free State released both the Littlejohns on 'mercy'

grounds. Finally our 'idealist' carried out an armed robbery in Derbyshire for which he got seven years.

Littlejohn repeatedly denied any plan to attack the POWs. He claimed to have 'no feelings' against them. Twice, however, his real views came out. Once when he was asked what he had been doing in Belfast. 'Killing murdering bastards like these' (pointing to the POWs in the dock) came his reply. And again later, he suddenly snapped 'I would hang every goddamn one of them'. Littlejohn clearly had every intention of continuing his 'idealist' mission - dirty tricks against the Irish people - by seeking to incite trouble between the POWs and the other prisoners.

Sean Kinsella made it clear that if Littlejohn had not engaged in this trouble making he would not have been attacked. He pointed out that POWs have managed to 'co-exist peacefully' with Loyalist prisoners. Indeed, it has yet to be explained why Littlejohn, who is not Category A, was put in Gartree alongside the POWs. Did the Home Office hope to see an attack on the POWs?

The incident shows how the solidarity of all prisoners acts as a powerful weapon against machinations whether from the ruling class or their 'unofficial' agents. This solidarity was demonstrated in the court case. The strength and determination of the Irish POWs in defending themselves was also once again confirmed. FRFI sends greetings to all four comrades.

Terry O'Halloran

Irish Solidarity Movement



ISM's picket of Gartree prison

GARTREE PRISON PICKET

The Irish Solidarity Movement culminated its Week Of Action (4-10 June) with a militant show of solidarity with the Irish Prisoners of War at Gartree Prison.

Over 80 people shouted their support and solidarity to the 11 Irish POWs in Gartree Prison and condemned Gartree's harsh and repressive regime. Present were: Irish Solidarity Committee supporters from London, Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Bradford, Liverpool; the Pearse/McDaid Sinn Féin Cumann; the Breakout! Collective; Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!; Bristol TOM; Nottingham Irish Solidarity Group; Glasgow University Irish Solidarity Society; Ireland's War Support Group.

The picket received messages of solidarity from Graham Little, English prisoner; Ken Livingstone, leader of the GLC; Pat Healey, prospective Labour MEP; Patricia Reeva from Holland, and Southampton ISC.

It has been reported to the Irish Solidarity Movement by English prisoners that the prison officers at Gartree were very hostile to the prisoners after the picket. On Monday, a mentally disturbed prisoner attacked Vince Donnelly, Irish POW, with a pair of scissors. Prisoners believe the attack was set up by prison officers. Vince was unharmed but was then transferred to Winson Green Prison, Birmingham for 28 days solitary confinement. This act of revenge by the prison authorities has failed to undermine the prisoners' res-

istance. The prisoners have already asked when the ISM will be holding another picket! Vince Donnelly wrote from Winson Green.

'It's very encouraging to see the increasing solidarity, as indeed was shown by fellow-prisoners the day before I came here. There was also great support for your very successful picket which was heard loud and clear. This time most other prisoners seemed fully aware of what it was all about and highly congratulatory of the whole operation.'

LOCAL NEWS

The ISM has been mobilising for the 5 August Sinn Féin demonstration in Sheffield and the 18 August demonstration for British withdrawal in London. Sinn Féin and IRSP will be speaking on 18 August. The ISM argued and voted for their right to do so.

Local ISCs and other affiliates in Manchester, Leeds, London and Southampton have been organising mobilising events for the two August demonstrations and the ISM Delegation. In South London several organisations including SLISC, South London TOM, Labour Committee on Ireland and the Irish in Britain Representation Group are cooperating to organise a public meeting for the August demonstrations. In Manchester a successful public meeting was held 'from the PTA to the Police Bill' at which speakers were MISC, NCCL and Campaign Against the Police Bill.

In Southampton the 5 August Mobil-

ising Committee (Southampton ISC and LC) met concerted efforts to disrupt its 11 July public meeting at which ex-POW Gerry MacLochlainn of Sinn Féin was the key speaker. The Labour Council banned the use of the Civic Centre for the meeting. Transport and General Workers Union staff went on strike to prevent the TQWU Hall being used instead and the meeting was finally hosted by the local West Indian Centre, St Matthews. Despite TV South repeating throughout the day the lie that the meeting was cancelled, over 50 people attended. Gerry MacLochlainn, himself a TQWU member said: 'It didn't surprise us that we ended up being made welcome to speak amongst our brothers and sisters from the black community'.

ISCs attended the Sinn Féin Michael Gaughan Commemoration picket of Parkhurst Prison on 3 June. 65 attended - Sinn Féin, North London and South London ISCs, Southampton ISC, Bristol TOM and Irish Freedom Movement. London and Southampton ISCs also attended Sinn Féin's picket of Wormwood Scrubs on 8 July.

The national ISM delegation to Belfast on the anniversary of internment is on 11/12 August. Contingents are leaving from London, the North-West and Scotland. Many of those wishing to go are young and unemployed - the ISM would appreciate donations towards their costs that will enable these young people to show their solidarity at first hand to the people of Belfast.

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION AND CONFERENCE

On 13/14 October the ISM has called a national march and conference in London. The ISM urges all those active in support of the Irish people to support and sponsor the weekend; to join local mobilising committees; and to take leaflets and posters to build for the weekend. For further details of mobilising in your area write to the ISM, BM Box 1320, London WC1N 3XX.

WORKERS PARTY: ANTI-REPUBLICAN LIE MACHINE

In the storm which followed the DUP Assembly member George Seawright's fascist remarks against nationalists the Workers Party took the opportunity to launch a slanderous attack on the Republican Movement. These loyal servants of British imperialism declared that they were:

'...completely opposed to Nazi doctrines as expressed in Provisionalism and the manic ravings of the DUP's G Seawright.' (Irish News 3 June)

At their recent annual conference Workers Party President Tomás MacGiolla described IRA attacks on UDR personnel as 'racist' and the Provisionals as 'vicious, sectarian and fascist'. The torrents of abuse from these renegades are truly unending. How far they find any echo amongst the oppressed nationalist people was fittingly demonstrated in the derisory vote they secured in the EEC elections. The nationalist people have long since seen through Her Majesty's Workers Party. Terry Marlowe

Roundup

● Liverpool fights apartheid

The threat of a mass picket has successfully prevented the Liverpool *Daily Post/Echo* from holding a social to promote tourism with South Africa. The social, which was to be attended by representatives from South African tourist companies, had been scheduled to take place on 12 June in the Holiday Inn, and had been preceded by a series of advertisements in the *Daily Post/Echo*. Liverpool FRFI issued a leaflet calling for a picket of the Holiday Inn. The leaflet pointed out that 12 June 1964 was the date on which Nelson Mandela and his co-defendants in the Rivonia trial were sentenced to life imprisonment. Word spread throughout Liverpool about the social, and it soon became clear that there would be a massive number of people turning out to blockade the social. Local MPs and councillors contacted by FRFI, and, separately, the CRC, made protests to the *Daily Post/Echo*. On 8 June the *Echo* announced that the social was cancelled. Had it gone ahead, it would have been met by probably the most revolutionary protest against apartheid ever seen in this country. As it was, the cancellation was a victory in the struggle for the complete isolation of the apartheid state.

● Mobile picket against apartheid

On Saturday 23 March, Bradford Anti-Apartheid Group held a mobile picket against British imperialism's support for the apartheid regime in South Africa. For five hours we picketed Barclay's Bank, the Co-op, Thomas Cook, the Yorkshire Electricity Board and NEXT clothes—petitioning, chanting slogans and singing South African freedom songs. Comrades attended from Leeds FRFI, Leeds Park Lane College AA Group, plus individuals from York, Cleveland and Huddersfield.

The picket reached its height outside the Yorkshire Electricity Board and NEXT clothes where loud singing and chanting could be heard which attracted many

youth to join us. A white Rhodesian apartheid-lover tried to argue with us but was forced to slink away after loud and noisy chants of 'Sons of Criminals—OUT!', watched by a crowd of fifty shoppers.

After spirited renderings of 'Mandela Mandela', 'Bandiera Rossa', and the 'Internationale', we finally finished our line display of solidarity with the Southern African peoples. Over £35 was collected, and 90 FRFIs were sold. The success of the picket was measured by the letters we have received from people asking to join Bradford AA. John Stephenson

● Liverpool 24 hour picket

Like last year, the 24 hour commemoration picket of the June 1976 Soweto Uprising organised by Liverpool FRFI on the weekend of 29/30 June proved a magnificent success. Over 70 people participated, collecting 3,800 signatures on a petition calling for the release of Nelson Mandela and all South African political prisoners. 450 copies of FRFI were sold, and sufficient funds collected to allow a donation of £30 to the ANC. The picket was interspersed with singing of South African freedom songs. During the Saturday afternoon, crowds gathered, picketers and black youth arguing with racists and BNP members. The great support for the picket has proved once again that the way to build a mass movement against apartheid is by being out on the streets.

● Edinburgh FRFI 12 hour picket, June 16

Edinburgh FRFI staged a successful 12 hour picket on 16 June to commemorate the Soweto uprisings of 1976. Hundreds of people signed our petition calling for an end to British collaboration with apartheid and 320 FRFIs were sold. About 40 people took part in the picket's activities; petitioning, hourly rallies with chants and songs and a major rally at 2pm. Everyone who passed the East End of Princes Street between 8am and 8pm was confronted with

the picket's placards and banners and were asked, 'Which side are you on?' Hundreds of people took the side of the oppressed people in struggle, against the racist regime in South Africa and its imperialist backers over here.

SMASH APARTHEID!

● Housing Department spy

When returning home on 26 June, after putting up posters for the Manchester Irish Solidarity Committee, an FRFI supporter, Chris Procter, discovered that he had been followed home by plain clothes police. When Chris went to his door one policeman came to be looking for an address which does not exist. Having looked at the number on Chris's door he then left to be picked up by a waiting car. The following day Bill Milner of Longsight Housing Department contacted Chris's area housing office enquiring who lived in his address and what his background was. On whose behalf was he doing this? He was working on behalf of the police. The matter is now being raised with councillors in the area and the trade union at the housing department.

● Sponsorship results: 1984 London Marathon

A total of £180.50 was collected in on sponsorship forms for our two FRFI runners who completed this year's London Marathon in 2 hours 48 minutes and just over 3 hours.

This is how the final count runs: 25 pence from Mr Knott—still unemployed—and £3.20 from Tony Bloor, £7 from Blackburn, £4 from St Albans, £2.60 from Essex, £46 from Manchester, £2 from Dundee, £5.10 from Leeds, £5 from Bradford, £65.40 North London and £18.30 South London. Many thanks to you all.

And if this good effort has inspired you to organise a sponsored walk or run in your area to raise money for FRFI—do go ahead. We can send you sponsorship forms.

Correction to review of Sinn Féin pamphlet 'Irish Republican POW Campaign'.

Unfortunately we printed the wrong address; it is available from BM Box 6191, London WC1N 3XX. Price 60p + 25p p&p. Cheques payable to O'Brien.

● EISC at miners' gala

This year's miners gala in Edinburgh was a much bigger and more militant event than normal, with thousands of miners, miners' families, trade unionists and others marching through Edinburgh in support of the miners' strike. Edinburgh Irish Solidarity Committee had a contingent on the march and produced a leaflet

drawing the parallels between police violence on picket lines and British repression in Ireland. As we marched, shouting 'Victory to the miners! Police thugs out of the pits!', a group of loyalists walked alongside us on the pavement shouting 'Victory to the UVF!', showing where their loyalties lie in the miners' strike. When we reached the gala some of them tried to grab our banner and were firmly dealt with by our stewards and NUM officials. They soon crawled off to their drinking dens for the afternoon and we continued leafletting and telling miners about our committee's activities. Colin Thom

● FRFI collects for miners

FRFI has held financial and material aid collections for the miners in Scotland, Leeds and London. Money and food has been taken to Fife pit villages, Newstead in Nottinghamshire and in Leeds a sponsored run is being held to raise funds. In London over £100 in cash and £40 of food was collected in Holloway Rd and Seven Sisters Road. FRFI supporters have also been making regular workplace collections—with one London teacher collecting nearly £100.

Larkin publications

The revolutionary road to communism in Britain
Manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist Group
Price £1.50 (+30p p&p) 175 pages



£15 SPECIAL DEAL

Receive all our publications (including the books), FRFI, pamphlets, national leaflets, for £15 for one year. We hope that those of you who can, will give even more so that a donation can go to our funds.

Orders etc. to Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909 London WC1N 3XX

Ireland: the key to the British revolution by David Reed

Price £3.95 (+50p p&p) 430 pages

'... a British Socialist/Marxist analysis of modern Irish history. It's also fine scholarship—well argued, with extensive notes and a splendid bibliography. Its historic cornerstone in Ireland is James Connolly and its present-day manifestation in Britain is the Irish Solidarity Movement...'

Irish Times

'David Reed's book gives a detailed account of the last 140 years of the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland and its effect on the workers' movement in Britain. It is written in a simple and easy to read style and must be of great value to the teenage youth... and also to the adult worker who knows little about the struggle in Ireland or its vital importance...'

Alan Blase, *Kidnapper*

'The cover depicts a 1971 New Lodge riot and a 1981 Torteth riot. Add up the cover and title and you get David Reed's message—the provo gospel according to St Marx... an alarming book...'

Irish Times

How you can help with distribution:

Please let us know of any bookshops near you. We especially need information for the south, south west, south east and Wales. We still need to have a lot more addresses if we are to reach country-wide distribution. If you can help by taking publicity material for the books into your local bookshop, let us know. We can send this to you.

Don't forget you can also help us by going to your local library or university library to order the books.



EVENTS JULY/AUG/SEPT

14-27 JULY

● LONDON

Double Celebration: '5 Years of the Nicaraguan Revolution' '1953 Assault on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba'. Speakers from Nicaragua and Cuban embassies, SWAPO and NUM. Workshops, Films, Food, Bar, Cuban and Nicaraguan Rums, Cliche, Music from Sonido de Londres, The Republic, Ebony International. Saturday 21 July 1.30pm to midnight. Manning Hall, University of London. Malet St, London WC1. Entrance: Afternoon £1.50 (£1.00), Evening £3.00 (£2.00). All Day £4.00 (£3.00). Organised by Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign and Britain Cuba Resource Centre

● LONDON

Public Meeting Irish Solidarity Movement Delegation to Ireland 1984. Internment—Repression in Ireland today—Solidarity with the Irish People—Join the ISM delegation. Wednesday 25 July 1984 Room 3, The Crypt, St Matthews Meeting Place, Brixton Hill, Brixton SW2 7.30pm. (nearest tube: Brixton) 40p/20p UB40. Called by London Irish Solidarity Committees

● MANCHESTER

Public Meeting Viraj Mendis Must Stay! Deportations No Way! Speakers include: Anwar Ditta. Thursday 26 July at the Basement Theatre, New Town Hall, Manchester. Entrance adjacent to rear of Central Reference Library opposite Friends Meeting House. Called by Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign. For details of the campaign telephone (061) 273 5947 or write to VMDC, c/o Box 38, 434 Corn Exchange Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN

28 JULY-10 AUG

● DUNDEE

12 hour picket Free Nelson Mandela! Free All South African Political Prisoners! Smash British Collaboration! Saturday 28 July 8am-8pm City Square Dundee. Called by Dundee FRFI—All welcome

● BRADFORD

Public Meeting: Victory to the Irish People! Troops Out Now!—Speakers invited include Sinn Féin, ISM. Thursday 2 August, Bradford Central Library 7.30pm. Called by Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!

● SOUTH LONDON

Public Meeting to build for 18 August British Withdrawal from Ireland demonstration. Thursday 2 August Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, Brixton SW2, 7.30pm. Organised by, and speakers from South London Irish Solidarity Committee, Lambeth TOM, South London LCI, South London IBRG, South London Connolly Association, South London Women and Ireland

● LEEDS

Street Meeting Hands Off Ireland! Saturday 4 August, Grandways, Roundhay Road, LS8, 11.1pm. Called by Leeds ISC

● BRADFORD

Public Meeting Stop the Deportation of Viraj Mendis! Tuesday 7 August Bradford Central Library, 7.30pm. Called by Bradford Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign. For information, write to the Defence Campaign, c/o The Slany Plough Bookshop, 6 Edmund Street, Bradford 5

● LONDON

Public Meeting Women Unite for People's Power International Day of Solidarity with the Women of South Africa. Thursday 5 August Hackney Town Hall, Mare St, London E8, 7pm. The ANC choir will be present. There will be a material aid collection. Called by ANC

11 AUG-1 SEPT

● LONDON

The Africa Centre 20th Anniversary Weekend. Friday 17 August: African Dawn, Dade Krama, £3.00 8.30pm. Saturday 18 August: 12.30pm—Debate on Africa 'The Last Years'; 9pm-3am The Anniversary Party. The Africa Centre, Covent Garden, London WC2. Tel 01-836 1973

● DUNDEE

Public Meeting 'Common Cause'—EISC Video Film and Report from Belfast by member of recent EISC delegation. Wednesday 29 August, Wellgate Library Meeting Room 7.30pm. Admission 50p—Employed, 25p Wageless. Called by Dundee Irish Solidarity Committee

● LEEDS

Public Meeting The Struggle for Freedom in Namibia Thursday 30 August, Trades Club, Savile Mount, Leeds 7, 7.30pm. Called by Leeds FRFI

● LEEDS

Picket of YEB and Barclays Bank Saturday 1 September Meriton Centre 10.30-12.30. Called by FRFI

● BRADFORD

Bradford Anti-Apartheid Group meets fortnightly. For details write to: Bradford AA Group, c/o The Slany Plough Bookshop, 6 Edmund St, Bradford 5

IRISH SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

The Irish Solidarity Movement has affiliated bodies in Dundee, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Bradford, Southampton, North, South and East London. The ISM can be contacted by writing to ISM, BM Box 1320, London WC1N 3XX

● IRISH SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

August Delegation to Belfast. Join the Irish Solidarity Committees in this delegation to join the commemoration of the introduction of Internment. Groups leaving from Scotland, Manchester and London. Saturday August 11-Sunday August 12. Contact EISC c/o Box 110, First of May Bookshop, 43 Candelmaker Row, Edinburgh for further details

GREETINGS TO IRISH POWS

The following Irish Republican prisoners have forthcoming birthdays. FRFI sends our greetings and asks our readers to send birthday cards, preferably recorded delivery to ensure their arrival.

July (exact date not known), Sean Hayes, 341418, HM Prison, Welford Rd, Leicester. 2 August, Stephen Nordonne, 758663, HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight. 15 August, Paul Hill, 462778, HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics., LE16 7RP. 3 September, Ronnie McCartney, 483799, also at Gartree.

THIRD WORLD FILMS OF STRUGGLE

organised by the Namibia Support Committee in solidarity with SWAPO of Namibia. Africa Centre, King Street WC2. 23-26 July 7pm. Entrance £2.50 waged, £1.50 unwaged. Monday 23 July 'Namibia: the Last Colony' (England, 1984) powerful recent documentary about conditions in occupied Namibia PLUS 'Field Diary' (France/Israel 1982) grippingly shot feature documentary which in a series of remarkable sequences lays bare the violence inherent in Zionism and the suffering and strength of the Palestinians. Tuesday 24 July 'Kwanza' (30mins) recent documentary about the resilience and spirit of resistance shown by Namibians in SWAPO's refugee camps at Kwanza Sul PLUS 'The Chapel' (Congo, 1979) first chance in this country to see Jean-Michel Tchissoulou's feature, set in 1930s Africa. Wednesday 25 July 'Passing the Message' (1981, 47 mins) inspiring documentary about trade union organising in South Africa PLUS 'Storm over Asia' (USSR, 1928) rarely seen classic of the Soviet cinema, by V. Pudovkin, about a Mongol trader who becomes leader of his people against foreign exploitation. Thursday 26 July 'Cancer of Betrayal' (1972, 22 mins) a record of Amílcar Cabral's speech at the funeral of Kwame Nkrumah in April 1972 PLUS 'Ceddo' (Senegal 1977) Oumane Sembene's controversial feature about African resistance to foreign penetration, including that of Islam.

READING SERVICES FOR BLIND READERS

Do you or anyone you know want our literature recorded or in Braille? We have found out about a reading service which will provide a recording of FRFI monthly and/or Braille or books. The Revolutionary Road to Communism in Britain: Manifesto of the RCG and Ireland: the key to the British revolution by David Reed. They will also provide recordings of any other left literature you want. For more information write to us: FRFI BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

Great prison coverage!

Dear FRFI,
The coverage of prisons by FRFI is excellent: a small voice, crying in a wilderness, is better than the sensual deprivation of total silence. But... I must add, as a personal opinion (because otherwise it amounts to incitement to violence, and, as a side-issue, incitement to treason), that the torture and generalized inhumanity in British police stations and prisons will be curtailed only by armed propaganda. (It will be stopped only by revolution.)
'Democratising' the prisons would merely be negotiating an 'acceptable' level of inhumanity: as we must smash the bourgeoisie, as we must smash the state apparatus, so we must smash the prisons - re-designing a sewer does not stop it from being a sewer.
Issue No 40 of FRFI contains

one of the best pieces I've seen in the past 15 years or so - is the article on the miners' actions. It was good to read something which didn't side-step the issue of revolutionary violence, and which simultaneously showed the harsh reality of state-organized terror and the educational aspects of responding with organized violence. Further, it was useful to see how clearly the political points were brought out by the comrades doing the reporting.
In comparison with Britain, the prisons over here are remarkably soft; the control is exercised through psychological manipulation rather than immediate physical brutality. (Physical brutality occurs, but the frequency is nowhere near the Brit level. This might well be a consequence of the functional separation between 'guards' and 'security personnel' - the latter are the ones with the big stick and the rifle). I must also point out that, by and large, the

prisoners over here are also soft. I have heard of no reprisals for the frequently-occurring treachery. However... a few of us are working on the problem, and on occasion we manage to get some interesting debates going. The struggle continues.
Alan Reeve
Pomstationweg 14, Holland

Tribute to FRFI

Dear FRFI,
I wish to thank you for the copy of David Reed's book which I received. I will certainly order it at the library, and will compile a list of local bookshops and do what I can to help your publications. I have been an admirer of FRFI since the hunger strike struggles and have managed to get hold of most issues, and find them refreshing in their uncompromising approach to racism and imperialism.
I must confess my faith in the British leftists has taken a severe battering over the past fifteen years, but thankfully you seem to share my disgust, and for that you deserve success.
I must state before I finish, how much I am enjoying David Reed's book. It is a magnificent work, which makes a great contribution to people's understanding, and hopefully will have the effect of embarrassing many of our rival left wing groups, if indeed they haven't gone too far down the road of treachery to feel such things an embarrassment any more.
Yours fraternally
M Murtagh

Irish liberation not genuine?

Dear FRFI,
Today is the first time I have read a copy of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!*, but I am glad I have at last discovered it.
I was very glad to read your condemnation of the visit to this country of Botha, that unspeakable neo-Nazi dictator from that hell-hole that is (until it is given its proper African name) 'South Africa'. It is appalling and terrifying that a Western leader should invite such a person for what were no doubt friendly talks at Number Ten.
When I came to your 'articles' on Northern Ireland, I could not believe I was reading the same paper. I could not believe the simplistic way in which you draw parallels between the genuine fight against sadistic oppression in South Africa and the insane acts of terrorism carried out by the neo-fascist morons that call themselves the 'IRA'. How you can compare genuine freedom fighters like those members of the ANC who daily risk their lives in the struggle to liberate South Africa from violent white minority rule, to the mindless cretins in Northern Ireland who more often than not blow up their own people in their indiscriminate campaign of terror, I cannot imagine. You insult genuine heroes like that beautiful angel of a man Nelson Mandela, and you spit on the graves of Africa's martyrs like Steve Biko, WOZA STEVE!!
What you fail to point out in your obvious support for the killing of innocent people in Northern Ireland is that the majority - the vast majority - of people in the North and South want Ireland to be part of the UK. In Ireland, everyone can vote. In South Africa, 75% of the population are denied the vote or any form of freedom by the white minority in that shit-heap. Please see the difference between genuine human suffering and struggle and mindless terrorism. The IRA have turned Ireland into

D-Day and the myths of WW2

Dear FRFI,
I felt sick when I read Ronald Reagan's D-Day Commemoration drivellings. But he merely expressed in a brash way what the imperialists have always been saying about Operation Overlord - the Normandy landings. They pretend that the D-Day landings were responsible for the defeat of fascist Germany. In fact the invasion of Europe was continually postponed by the imperialists, in the hope that German imperialism would crush the Soviet Union. Senator Harry S Truman, later US President, stated in July 1941, a month after the Nazi invasion of the USSR that 'If we see that Germany is winning the war, we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and in that way let them kill as many as possible...'
(New York Times 24 July 1941). In October 1942, Churchill wrote a memorandum to the Cabinet: 'My thoughts rest primarily in Europe - the revival of the glory of Europe... it would be a measureless disaster if Russian barbarism overlaid the culture and independence of the ancient states of Europe.' As a result the main military struggle of the war against German imperialism was conducted by the USSR. The British and US imperialists engaged in scraps with the German and Japanese imperialists for colonies in North Africa, the Middle East and

Asia - yet, militarily, these were a comparative sideshow. For example, at El Alamein, the British faced some 96,000 German troops in October 1942, while on the Eastern front, the Soviet people faced 70% of German troops - 3,405,000.
Once the Soviet-British Alliance had been signed, the question was naturally raised: when would the Second Front - the invasion of continental Europe - be opened? The British and US imperialists kept on promising it, but kept putting it off. 'Proof' of the 'futility' of such an invasion was provided by the Dieppe operation of August 19, 1942, planned by the late and over-lamented Lord Mountbatten, which resulted in 50% casualties.
The deciding factor which spurred the imperialists to actually undertake the invasion was the crushing defeat inflicted by the Red Army on the fascists at Stalingrad. This marked the beginning of the long march of

liberation which was to culminate in the hoisting of the hammer and sickle over the Reichstag in Berlin in May 1945. The peoples welcomed the Red Army with open arms, expropriating landlords, capitalists and collaborators, implementing popular power. The spectre of Communism was haunting Europe and so the imperialists invaded in an attempt to crush it.
No doubt we shall have to endure more hypocritical imperialist spouting next May, fortieth anniversary of the German surrender. It is important to remember that it is the power and strength of socialist countries which have so far prevented a new world war from breaking out, and learn the lesson taught by the millions of Soviet people who died fighting fascism - if you want peace you must fight imperialism.
Yours
Steve Palmer

Right to freedom

Dear FRFI,
I got the last issue of FRFI. I enjoyed reading the article about Nelson Mandela. It's quite surprising how many people here in this country who do not seem to have known or heard of Mandela, or just what's going on in South Africa. So it's good that groups like yourself try and make people understand just what South Africa and apartheid is all about. Also, too, there was a very good piece about that man David Kitson. To me, that was very important as he, like Mandela, has spent a long time in jail. Of course, as you know, the government of S Africa released Dave Kitson a few weeks ago, when their man Botha came to this country to see Thatcher. Obviously, by releasing him they tried or were hoping to gain a political advantage, or trying to fool the world how they in S Africa are bringing about reform and a more liberal regime.
The reason to me why the article on D Kitson was important is because he is a white man who had the courage of his conviction to make a stand against the evil regime of S Africa. For him, he could have just accepted the status quo.
A lot of people outside S Africa think that it's just a black v white issue. But of course, that has got nothing to do with it. It's

about man's right to freedom, ie education, housing, work and social justice. Wherever there is evil, it must be fought. People must realise that the government of S Africa is unique in the world: why? because it's based on racism. There's no other country in the world that has such a regime. Also, too, we know the help and support that Britain and USA and other so called free and democratic countries give to S Africa, so we, in these countries must support and give aid in any way we can to the people within S Africa, who oppose the government.
I believe there will be a picket outside this place sometime within the next few weeks. Of course, you know that there is a couple of Irish guys and a black guy, who have been on 'F' wing in isolation for some time now. So it will do their spirits good to know that there's people out there who support and care and know about them. I myself on seven or eight occasions have been on 'F' wing, so I know what the feeling is like being there. And of course, we remember that in 1974 the Home Office had to close down the special unit which was 'F' wing, because of the brutality, physically and mentally. I think now I will close this letter as we only get four pages to write on anyway.
Yours sincerely,
Mr M A Russell,
Wakefield Prison

Abuse of miners strike

Dear FRFI,
I thought your readers might be interested in an example of the way SWP sectarianism has undermined the struggle of the NUM against pit closures. A group of miners from South Kirby colliery addressed the union here at York university appealing for financial support. The meeting agreed to their request but three executive officers refused to sign 'illegal' cheques and refused to resign. After a series of meetings the officers were suspended, the hypocrisy of their position exposed for all to see. They claimed to support the miners but refused to break laws designed to smash the independence of the unions. They would not risk losing our union shop while miners were being thrown onto the dole and faced cavalry charges and other illegal police violence for which no one will be prosecuted.
At this stage there was united support for the miners and the careerists were on the run, but then the SWP stepped in. The President of South Kirby NUM revealed that the people who had addressed our meeting were not

an official deputation but members of the SWP. When questioned they denied that they visited the university and refused to hand over £440 they had collected. Eventually they paid £400 to the strike fund but £40 went straight to Kirby SWP. The result of this has been the end of collections for the miners and a boost for the union officers who claimed that money was being misused. Socialist Worker Student Society repeatedly hijacked the campaign in support of the miners and against the president, issuing leaflets under their own name, although SWSS is only a tiny faction of about 30 on campus and over 100 people were involved in a levy for the miners and a petition against the president. The SWP has pursued its own interests at the expense of the miners and YUSU. I believe the SWP supports Solidarity in Poland, the racist who is head of the Monday Club at this university is also proud to wear his 'Solidarnosc' t-shirt. Can someone explain to me the difference between the SWP and the Monday Club?
Good luck with all your campaigns,
Jim McIntyre
York University

FRFI FUND DRIVE JUNE/JULY: £657.72

Savage cuts in the region of £2 billion from social security payments have been inflicted on the working class over the past five years while now Thatcher & Co are happy to pay the political price of millions of pounds per week to try to defeat the miners' strike.

FRFI aims to build a movement capable of countering such attacks by the ruling class, of defending the oppressed in Britain and giving effective solidarity to liberation movements fighting the same struggle against imperialism.

To do this we need £500 a month to subsidise our paper and we can do this only with your help. Last month was very successful with £657.72 raised through collections, stalls at festivals and donations from individual supporters. In North London supporters raised £144.32, Edinburgh £125.84, South London £80.50, Manchester £51.80, Liverpool £49, Bradford £25.43, Leeds £24, Dundee £14.37. Readers and supporters from Ireland, Australia, Cheshire, Yorkshire, Surrey and Essex contributed £42.86 and Mary from Canada sent £100. FRFI thanks you all for this tremendous effort.

We will publish all contributions in this column. If you want your name or your organisation mentioned alongside the donation please say so.

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HANDS OFF IRELAND



EDMAN DOYLE

INTERNMENT 13TH ANNIVERSARY

united around the demand for the end of the loyalist state. The British state replied in the only way it knows. Cold-blooded murder was the order of the day. By 13 August 22 people had been killed; 19 were civilians. But even this failed to break the struggle of the nationalist people.

The inquiries Britain held into the abuses against the internees could not cover up the truth. Many of those interned were awarded damages. Despite this no one was charged with torture. The British state stood accused by international opinion and was forced to change its policy. Internment without trial was replaced by judicial internment - with torture in police cells, the use of informers, long remands, Diplock courts, and imprisonment in concentration camps.

Thirteen years on in Britain methods of repression used against the Irish people are now being used against those fighting for their rights here. To extract confessions the hooding technique was used by the Birmingham serious crimes squad, as brought to light in August 1983. In Blidworth and other mining areas in Notts the police have brought terror and intimidation onto the streets in an attempt to crush the community's support for the miners' strike.

Repression breeds resistance. Thirteen years ago internment was introduced in an attempt to terrorise the nationalist community and remove activists from the streets. The continuing march of the Irish people on the road to freedom shows the ability of the oppressed people to resist repression. Thirteen years on the British state remembers internment as it starts to terrorise all who fight for their rights in this country. Thirteen years on we must remember internment and support the struggle of the Irish people for their resistance to British state repression. The Irish people have shown how to fight those obstacles that the British state places in the way of the fight for freedom and justice.

Chas Millington

Shoot to kill is legalised

On Monday 4 June Diplock court Judge Lord Maurice Gibson acquitted three RUC men of the murder of unarmed IRA volunteer Eugene Toman. Eugene and two comrades, Sean Burns and Gervaise McKerr, were murdered by an RUC undercover 'shoot-to-kill' squad on 11 November 1982 in Lurgan. The three unarmed volunteers were travelling in a car on the evening of 11 November when three RUC men opened fire on the car and fired 103 bullets at it, instantly killing the three men.

The four day non-jury trial of Sgt William Montgomery and RUC men David Brannigan and Frederick Robinson was a complete farce. The RUC's claim that the car had smashed through a roadblock was never substantiated in court. Eugene Toman's body was found outside the car and, in spite of evidence from Chief State pathologist Professor Thomas Marshall that Toman could not have got out of the car after being shot, the RUC's story that he was shot while still in the car was accepted. Evidence was also given to the court of six spent shells being found beside the car, although all three RUC men denied being near the car when they fired the 103 rounds between them.

Justice Gibson not only acquitted the three RUC men but commended them for their 'courage and determination on bringing the three deceased men to justice - in this case to the final court of justice.' And he wanted this to be put on their records. He then went on to criticise the Director of Public Prosecutions for bringing the charges on what he described as 'tenuous' evidence. A month after he made the remarks he was taught a sound lesson about justice. At the weekend of 1 July his unoccupied holiday home in Donegal was badly damaged by a fire. Judge Gibson's remarks proved what the nationalist community have always known: a 'shoot-to-kill' policy exists in the Six Counties and any charges brought against the crown forces are merely a pretence of justice aimed at appeasing outrage at British repression in Ireland.

In a non-jury Diplock court the judge's final decision doesn't emerge from the evidence given but from where his loyalties lie with British imperialism. Since November 1982 19 people have

been murdered by the 'shoot-to-kill' policy operated by the crown forces in Northern Ireland. Few people have been charged with these murders and as of yet not one has been convicted. In the most recent case an undercover army ambush in County Tyrone resulted in William Price being shot dead on 13 July.

When Thomas (Kidso) Reilly was shot at point blank range by a British soldier in August 1983 his killing was widely reported because his brother was in the band Stiff Little Fingers and he was a roadie for British band Bananarama who attended his funeral. However other victims of 'shoot-to-kill' have been passed over in silence by the servile media. Peter Barry of the Dublin Government was concerned about Judge Gibson's remarks because such blatant legal justification of murder would make the nationalist community think there was no justice for them in the Diplock courts and would increasingly turn to the IRA. James Prior, Britain's director of repression in the Six Counties, commented on the acquittal of the three RUC men saying that 'the law is the same for all, regardless of whether they are police, soldiers or civilians.'

What hypocrisy! At the same time as security forces are allowed to kill nationalists with impunity over 300 nationalists have been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment on the sole words of paid perjurers. As usual British imperialism has one rule for its servants and another for those who oppose it.

Lorna Morgan
Veronica Burns

Thirteen years ago on 9 August 1971 British troops moved into the nationalist areas of the Six Counties. Internment without trial had begun. The operation was masterminded by Frank Kitson, now head of UK Land Forces. The British Army swoop began at 4am. The troops smashed their way into homes. By the evening 342 people had been interned in three major holding centres. All were nationalists. 116 were released without charge after 48 hours as they had little or no connection with the Republican movement. The remainder were moved either to Crumlin Road or HMS Maidstone, a prison ship.

The internees were held under conditions of systematic brutality. They were denied sleep and food and physically and psychologically abused. Some were blindfolded and thrown out of helicopters which they were told were high in the air but were in fact only a few feet off the ground. Others were made to run the gauntlet barefoot between baton wielding troops over an obstacle course of tree stumps, broken glass, sharp stones and tacks. Many were forced to exercise to the point of exhaustion for hours on end. All were beaten.

Twelve internees were subjected to total sensory deprivation and torture for seven days. They were taken to Hollywood barracks and held in total isolation. While there they had hoods put over their heads and were made to wear loose-fitting boiler suits. They were forced to stand against a wall supported only by their fingertips until they collapsed. All the while they were subjected to a 'noise machine', in a cold room, which bombarded the brain with monotonous sounds of a certain pitch. The aim was not just to get confessions but to instil fear into the hearts of the nationalist people, to crush their spirit of resistance.

Far from crushing the resistance of the nationalist people, internment and all its sadistic brutality had the opposite effect. As the army raids went on the nationalist people of Derry rose up. Crowds gathered in the streets and stopped the soldiers from passing. The youth unleashed waves of petrol bombs. The Bogside, Creggan and Derry all became no-go areas for the army. The British army claimed that internment had destroyed the IRA. The IRA proved otherwise by launching a bombing campaign in August involving 100 explosions. The British army thought they could isolate the IRA from the people but youth flocked to join their army: the IRA. Crowds of people drew soldiers towards them and then scattered leaving the soldiers as sitting ducks for the IRA. The nationalist people united to oppose internment and British occupation. On 16 August 8,000 workers took part in a one day protest against internment. A rent and rates strike against internment was organised and 26,000 families were



Delegation to Ireland

11/12 August

The ISM is organising a delegation to Ireland for the annual anti-internment protests in the Six Counties. The delegation will be leaving from Scotland, the North and London on Friday 10 August and returning Monday 13 August. Details of times, cost etc from ISM.

Demonstrations

5 August
**March for Irish
Republican
Prisoners!**

Called by Sinn Fein (Britain)
Assemble 1pm Caborn Corner,
Spital Hill, Sheffield

18 August
**For British
withdrawal from
Ireland!**

Called by August 18
Demonstration Committee
Assemble 1pm Speakers
Corner, Hyde Park, London.

Fascist face of loyalism

The fascist nature of Loyalism reared its ugly head when George Seawright hit the headlines in June. In response to a protest by Catholic parents against a symbol of British rule in Ireland - the National Anthem - being played at mixed school concerts in Belfast, Seawright sank to the lowest depths of sectarian bigotry when he called the parents 'fanatic scum'. Seawright told a meeting of Belfast's City Council that the authorities should buy an incinerator to burn Catholics in, that members of the Republican movement were vermin and scum, and that there would be no peace in Ireland until they were all dead.

This bigot is no nonentity - a member of Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), he is also a member of Belfast's City Council and sits on James Prior's Northern Ireland Assembly. He recently gave an interview to the Magazine of the National Front stating that the NF's growth in British politics was a 'positive development'. The Northern Ireland Assembly refused to express revulsion at his remarks and the DUP attempted to cover its tracks by merely suspending him until he apologises. Seawright is unrepentant and has refused to apologise, knowing that he is in little danger of losing his privileged status whilst backed up by the British Government's Northern Ireland As-

sembly.

His fellow Unionists are in no position to condemn him. It was revealed in the June issue of *Searchlight* that Unionist politicians provided character witnesses for three members of a loyalist gang, the 'NF Skins', who brutally murdered a Catholic last year. Not surprisingly, the three received extremely light sentences for - not murder - but manslaughter.

Such racist statements by Seawright and his bedfellows only serve to highlight the rampant fascism inherent in the sectarian statelet created and sustained by British imperialism.

Pauline Sellars

National Demonstration and Conference

Called by Irish Solidarity
Movement

Demonstration

13 October

**Repatriation for all Irish
POW's!**

**Victory to the Irish People!
Troops Out Now!**

Assemble 1pm, Blidborough Street,
London WC1 (Tube: Kings
Cross/St Pancras)

Conference

14 October

Caxton House, St John's Way,
London N19 (Tube: Archway)

Further details to be announced. If you
want to help build these events contact:
ISM, BM Box 1320, London WC1N 3XX